

December 2011

# Call Sign

From the home of Dial-a-Cab International



*Does Jon Trevor look in pain?  
It's because he did 1000 push-ups  
to help a fellow driver...*



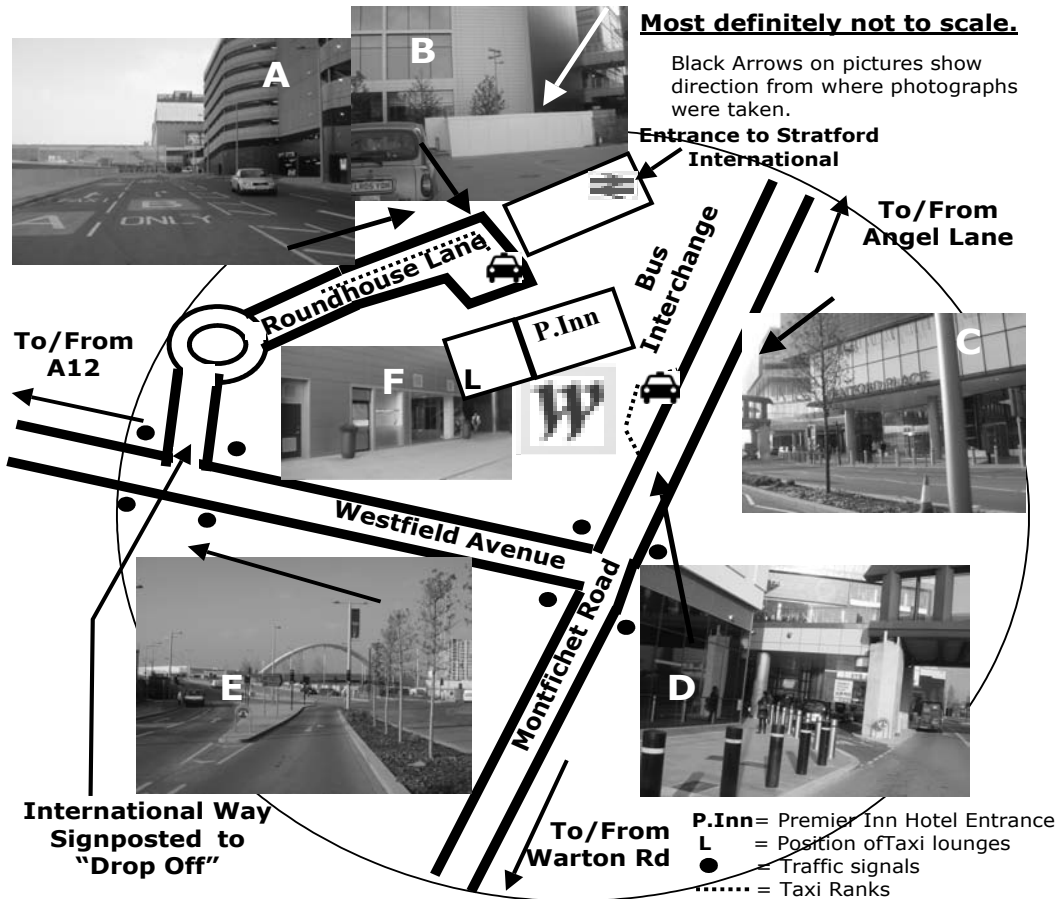
*Another 3 DaC drivers  
become Freeman of the  
City of London!*



# NASH'S NUMBERS

From Alan Nash (A95)

**Call Sign** has been inundated with requests about the new **Westfields E20** ranking arrangements claiming official maps don't make sense. I hope **Call Sign's** meets with your approval.



## Opening Hours

### Shops

Mon-Fri  
10:00-21:00  
Sat 09:00-21:00  
Sun 11:00-17:00

### Premier Inn & Casino

24Hr every Day

### Waitrose

Mon-Sat  
08:00-21:00  
Sun 11:00-17:00

### M&S

Mon-Fri  
10:00-21:00  
Sat 09:00-20:00  
Sun 11:00-17:00

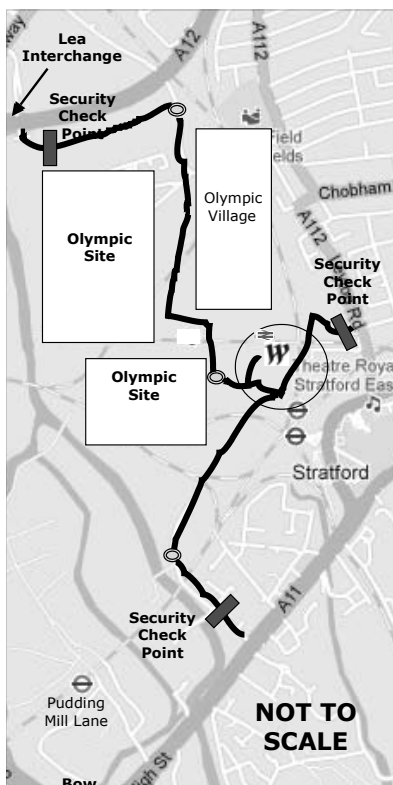
### John Lewis

Mon-Fri  
10:00-20:00  
Sat 09:00-20:00  
Sun 11:00-17:00

### Ground & 2nd floor restaurants

11:00 until late every day

No Christmas hours available at 16/11/11



The existing Stratford Station and its rank remain roughly in the same position it has always been, approached from the one way system in Great Eastern Rd, E15. Westfield and the Olympic site come under the postcode of E20. There are two ranks servicing Westfield Shopping Centre, the main rank is in Roundhouse Lane. with plenty of spaces and a Taxi lounge with TV and drinks available for drivers to have a short break. This rank is the main 'drop off' point and the only drop off point for the Premier Inn Hotel and 24 hour Casino. At present the rank isn't well serviced by either taxi's or customers. The taxi lounge is manned by representatives from 'Stratford City Cars' which take the main amount of work due the lack of cabs on the rank and the current obstruction (shown with an arrow in picture "B" between the rank and the lounges 'L & F'). The other rank is situated in Montfichet Rd adjacent to the 'Bus Interchange'. It appears most customers go to this rank, which is better served by taxis and holds 7 taxis. If it overflows into the bus lane, you may be moved on.

There are three entrances to the site, A12 at Lea Interchange, Angel Lane E15, and Warton Rd off High St E15. Each has security screening facilities. Picture 'E' shows the approach to International Way / Roundhouse Lane when approached from Angel Lane or Warton Rd entrances.

Picture 'A' shows the plentiful space on the main rank and drop off point. Picture 'B' shows a cab on point, the arrow points to where the Taxi Lounges are (obscured by a temporary structure).

Picture 'F' shows the taxi drivers and Customer Lounges.

Pictures 'C' & 'D' show the secondary (but most used) taxi rank.

See [www.myfav.co.uk](http://www.myfav.co.uk) with unlock code **taxi** for "What's On". Also this article in a larger colour format.



# from the editor's desk

Well, so that's another year gone that everyone seems to think has flown by – but it went far quicker than that! Now as we count down to the Olympics, 2012 will make 2011 feel as though it has dragged by! But business carries on...

## PCNs? Not me guv!

I don't often include personal events on this page, but I'm feeling quite chuffed at this moment and who else can I impart that info to if it isn't you! It was just three days after my birthday (yes, you forgot it again) and I was doing my real job of driving a taxi.

I had just left Waterloo Station and was heading north along Waterloo Road towards the bridge when a hand suddenly shot out. I looked quickly, but all you can see are zigzags or bus stops. Once you pass the Fire Station bar, there is literally nowhere you can legally stop. So I stopped on the zigzag, the lady got in and just 8 seconds later we were heading towards Holborn.

That same day, I was in Euston Road just approaching Dukes Road and heading towards Padders. Just ahead of me, the lights at Upper Woburn Place were green and the traffic – for a change – was flowing smoothly. Or it had been until a car at the lights suddenly slowed right down, apparently unsure of whether he/she needed to turn left or go straight ahead. The car following had to stop quickly, as did I. My problem was that stopping that suddenly meant that my front wheels were left resting inside the yellow box junction, placed for no apparent reason on the Dukes Road junction. Perhaps they had some paint over at the time?

Anyway, back to that journey; by the time the first car driver decided he/she needed to turn left, the lights changed to red and we were all stuck where we were, my front wheels just inside the box. But hey, I won't get a PCN for that. Like hell I won't!

Around one week or so later, two brown envelopes appeared in my letter box, both containing Penalty Charge Notices. One was from Lambeth for stopping on zigzags with access to a movie clip showing that I had stopped for 8 seconds, while the second was from the Mayor at Transport for London, informing me my front wheels had been photographed as stopping within that box junction. Both offered me bargain reduced prices of £65 if I swelled their coffers within 28 days. Well, after years of telling drivers to always appeal against the PCNs that are becoming more prevalent by the day, I had no choice but to appeal.

I emailed my appeal to Lambeth asking whether they would have issued a PCN to a bus that stopped on the zigzags because the bus stop was filled with buses already there? I then answered my own question by saying that of course they wouldn't because the bus driver would just be doing his job. I added that as a part of TfL, I too was just doing my job in the almost impossible position that Lambeth had put me in – leaving nowhere for taxis to stop outside one of the world's busiest stations!

I then emailed TfL explaining my Euston Road situation re the car that had stopped at a green light, forcing everyone behind to do the same. I again mentioned that taxis were part of the Mayor's TfL transport brigade and mentioned that buses constantly block up the junctions. Were they issued with tickets, I queried?

To cut two long stories short, I received two letters back around three weeks later. Lambeth didn't beat about the bush. Cancelled, they said,



but don't do it again! But we still have nowhere to pick up outside Waterloo.

TfL sent me a two page letter telling me what a naughty boy I had been, explaining that (unlike Lambeth), they do not make movie clips available unless you go to their Croydon office! They told me how I could appeal the matter further and why yellow boxes were important. Then at the end of the second page they told me that as a gesture of goodwill, they'd cancel this PCN!

Could the mention of us being part of the Mayor's transport system have made a difference? I don't know, but what I do know is that in all the PCNs I have received and appealed over the years, I have never mentioned TfL before and neither have I had any cancelled – bar one for going to the toilet at the top of Queensway last year. On that occasion I mentioned that I had the alternative of legally urinating on the rear offside wheel. I forgot to mention that I would first have to find a policeman to protect my modesty with his cape!

We don't get that many benefits for being in TfL, but appealing a PCN and mentioning it could just possibly be one...?

## Olympic fares increase?

I have been a licensed taxi driver for almost 41 years and been in the LTDA for many of those. I believe it to be the best trade organisation with undoubtedly the most experience. But I also believe the LTDA was wrong to suggest in a consultation document that taxi fares should operate on rate 3 during the Olympics. I'm not sure how the *Evening Standard* (who broke the story) got hold of a copy of the consultation document, but I hope it wasn't LTPH because whoever released it obviously did so to cause trouble.

But now it's out there, I believe we should withdraw the suggestion because we are going to be perceived as money-grabbers and after the Games are over, it will come back to bite us on the bum. I have had requests for comments from press agencies around the world and really didn't know what to say because the suggestion of what they refer to as a 22 percent increase at a time when the whole of Europe is sliding towards recession is – in my view – wrong and makes us look greedy. Rate 3 is a good clock, but with very heavy Olympic traffic added in, it will kill us. We should be fighting even harder for use of ORN lanes – however impossible that looks to be – and not be seen to be cashing in on something that is supposed to be a once-in-a-lifetime honour. Honours do not pay the bills and we need to pay those bills long after the Games leave our

shores and this increase, if it goes ahead, will become an albatross around our necks...

## Blue plaque?

Filling a magazine like *Call Sign* isn't always easy because it relies on outside influences – ie if nothing happens during the month or if you don't tell me about something interesting that happened to you, then this mag would suddenly become very thin. I have never stopped being grateful to DaC's drivers who always keep me informed about anything they believe would be worth reading about. But occasionally I have to see whether I can make my own news and one failed attempt happened last month.

I wrote to *English Heritage* suggesting a *blue plaque* be erected outside the **Albany Tavern** at the top end of Great Portland Street. I pointed out that on Sunday 7 June 1953, a meeting was set up by Bonnie Martyn at the Albany and that a number of licensed London taxi drivers raised the sum of £200 between them to begin a two way radio system so that passengers could phone for a taxi – the first of its kind in London. I added that Dial-a-Cab now had some 2000 drivers, a four-storey building in the City of London, will be 60 years old in 2013 and wondered whether it was worthy of a plaque?

Jane Biro, the English Heritage Blue Plaques Coordinator wrote back to say that events such as the ODRTS launch were rarely commemorated as they were currently only able to erect 12 plaques a year and had a shortlist of over 100! They added that Westminster Council runs their own Green Plaque scheme and that we could even erect a DIY plaque! What she was saying was no! I have now written to Westminster Council.

Anyone out there think I'm wasting my time on this or would it be of interest to point out to our passengers as we drive past the Albany?

## Stuart Pessok

I'm sad to hear that **Stuart Pessok** has decided to end his editorship of *TAXI Newspaper* after many years. We may well be competitors, but that has never stopped us having friendly chats and occasionally helping each other out with photos etc. So enjoy your retirement, Stuart...

## THE last word???

The swords have been drawn and the game is about to begin. Our two biggest competitors are John Griffin's Addison Lee and Hylton Lewis's Lewis Day. Now the first has bought the latter. The only question is who will be next? Does DaC have a price? Would you sell your share to John Griffin for £20,000???

## And of course...

I couldn't possibly end this issue without wishing you all either a happy Christmas, happy Chanukah or as the Americans call them, a happy holiday. *Call Sign* hopes to be back at the end of December with the first of its 2012 issues... and we all know what happens in 2012, don't we? Yep, it's the 200th birthday of Charles Dickens (1812-1870) with the Museum of London holding an exhibition on the life of the man who wrote classics as *David Copperfield*, *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol* starting next December! And apparently there are a few races planned in Stratford as well...

Alan Fisher  
callsignmag@aol.com

# reflections of the chairman

## GetTaxi

You have probably heard of *GetTaxi* and all the other numerous applications (apps) that are available to taxi drivers. All of them are very keen to portray the fact that they are in the market place in order to win taxi work back from the minicab industry and obviously, that should be applauded by us all. I have not commented before regarding these apps, as I did not wish to appear churlish and have them believe that the three radio circuits were in fear of losing their drivers to them. However, certain statements have been made in recent times that should be refuted by me.

It is obvious that **Dial-a-Cab** are not in a position to refuse our members use of some of the apps they receive on their phone – how would we know anyway? However *GetTaxi*, who actually install equipment into the taxi, has openly stated that the three radio circuits do not have any objection to them having their equipment fitted alongside ours – but nothing could be further from the truth. They are in direct competition with us and Dial-a-Cab would not agree to their equipment being fitted alongside ours. They did not even have the decency to check with us before making their statement.

In a later advertisement and although they had previously stated they were in existence to take work from minicabs, they went on to say that they had taken 120 accounts from the three radio circuits and even acquired the *Deutsche Bank* (DB) account! I have spoken to the other two circuits and to the best of their knowledge, they have lost nothing to *GetTaxi*; the same applies to us at Dial-a-Cab.

Naturally I was quite concerned when their ad claimed to have taken the DB account because I knew it was totally false, consequently, I contacted DB with the news. As you can imagine, they were not too impressed and contacted *GetTaxi*, who eventually stated that they had inadvertently put out some 'misinformation'.

According to them, one individual who happened to work for DB had used them. So with their tail between their legs, they had to publish a retraction in the 15 November issue of *Taxi* (page 8) admitting that they had actually misled people. Those were not the actual words they used, but 'misinformation' and 'misled' are pretty similar. I just hope that in the future they actually print the truth and not endeavour to mislead the trade and members of the public with their 'misinformation'.

## Freedom of information (FOI) and the London Cross Dressers Club (LCDC)

You may remember just over a year ago, the **LCDC** made a big issue of the fact they had reported us to **London Taxi and Private**



**Hire** and claimed that we had been instructed to acquire a Private Hire Operators Licence - which was and is quite ridiculous. I then entered into some very amicable negotiations with LTPH and furnished them with legal advice. The outcome was that LTPH agreed we did not need an Operators Licence and so once again the LCDC were actually shown up for what they are, vindictive little people.

I actually reproduced the letter I received from LTPH in *Call Sign* just so there would not be any doubt regarding their findings. The LCDC then went into print to state they did not lie about the situation, they had simply been "misinformed" (is that similar to misinformation)? However, whichever way you look at it they once again had egg on their face.

As I have stated previously, it was over a year ago when that situation first materialised, so can you imagine my reaction when I received a telephone call from the legal department of TfL regarding that incident of 12 months back? Well, I couldn't stop laughing because the Chairman and committee of the LCDC had now applied to TfL under the *Freedom of Information Act* to have supplied to them the legal advice I had submitted to TfL! TfL refused the request, so the vindictive little people appealed against the decision, consequently TfL contacted me to see whether I objected to the LCDC seeing the advice I had given them?

As you can no doubt imagine, I refused that request - which I am sure the LCDC appreciated. I am still at a loss to understand why and how these small minded, petty and vindictive individuals can see fit to spend time – not to mention their member's money - in an attempt to discredit me and even then, just for purely personal reasons. I know their Chairman, Mr Davis, fancied himself as a boxer in the past, but come on Grant, throw the towel in! I have beaten you on every occasion you have taken me on and you may well finish up a bit punch drunk. Mind you, the way you carry on, you probably are already!

## End of Year

Another year has come and gone and it has been a pretty tough one and I just hope we all fare better in 2012. But with all the tur-

moil going on in the money markets, we will probably get more of the same - especially the way the media is making the public so apprehensive.

Consequently, we must do everything possible to secure our account base; every account is precious and we must do everything possible to maintain that base and yes, you will have to put yourselves out occasionally. You must remember it was not too long ago when the public did not have too much choice, they had the big three radio circuits and that was about it.

However, today there are a proliferation of Private Hire companies that want your account work, even more so now as you have probably heard that Addison Lee have bought Lewis Day. That now makes them bigger than possibly two of our radio circuits added together, they can offer a 15 minute ASAP service and at a cheaper price than us. So we must be vigilant and do the very, very best we can. It was not too long ago - Christmas 2007 actually - when Dial-a-Cab paid members £521k in Christmas bonuses just to cover the account work! That seems an awfully long time ago now.

Remember, you are our Directors of first impressions and our clients will judge the DaC organisation by the standards you maintain, please aim for the highest levels at all times because as I've said so many times before, our clients have a choice!

*Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and staff a very happy Christmas...*

**Brian Rice**  
**Chairman**  
**Dial-a-Cab**

## HOME PC REPAIR

By **Essex PC Fix**

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Mobile - 07866 395 831  
Office - 01708 444480 (between 8AM and 8PM)  
Web - [www.essexPCfix.co.uk](http://www.essexPCfix.co.uk)

Area Covered - Hornchurch and 8 miles out - others by appointment



# Demo Halts London!

Following the student demonstration in central London on 9 November, a *United Cabbies Group* organised demo involving licensed taxis continued the chaos already caused by the march. The UCG demo was to complain about minicab touting and unsafe travel for the public and cited satellite offices in particular. This was despite a request from LTPH for drivers not to join in, calling the UCG's justification for the

protest as being "based on inaccurate and false claims about London Taxi and Private Hire and the work it undertakes to provide a safe service for the public." Strangely, although the LTPH request was sent out the previous day, it was embargoed until the actual day of the demo making it virtually impossible to inform and stop drivers from turning up.

The number of taxis taking part varied depending on which newspaper you read,



going from 100 up to 2000! RMT General Secretary **Bob Crow** was at Trafalgar Square informing the press as to why the demo was taking place.

He said: "The licensed taxi trade in London is under an unprecedented attack and that's why RMT members in the industry are working for maximum unity to defend jobs, safety and the quality of service to the public."

According to the RMT, the number of sexual

## Traffic chaos caused by students and then taxi drivers

assaults that had taken place against women travelling in licensed and unlicensed minicabs in 2010 had increased by 54 percent.

UCG spokesperson, **Jonathan Myers**, said that around 4,000 black cabs had attended the protest claiming that TfL and LTPH were not enforcing the law regarding licensed and unlicensed minicabs.

**Dial-a-Cab** driver **Jon Robinson (E88)** told *Call Sign*:

"I was at the demo and surrounded by taxis – but sadly many of them had fares in. I find it sad that drivers care so little about their own business and couldn't sacrifice just an hour to help make a point."

Unusually for a taxi demo, most of the people inconvenienced by the event were sympathetic when *Call Sign's* reporter told them the official reason...

## Blackwall Tunnel northbound work completed

The northbound Blackwall Tunnel safety improvement works have been completed 13 months earlier than originally expected. These include improvements designed to significantly reduce closures - last year 1750 incidents forced the northbound tunnel to close. A new HGV lane has also been introduced to enable all over-height vehicles to be diverted away from the tunnel before they reach the entrance. Over-height vehicles caused the northbound Blackwall Tunnel to be closed 1448 times last year leading to a total of 56 hours of avoidable closures. There are also new ventilation fans, better lighting, upgraded CCTV and new communication systems installed throughout the 114 year old tunnel. As a result, the overnight closures ended on November 11.

New safety inlets have been constructed in the tunnel wall with emergency phones and fire extinguishers providing a safe area for drivers whose vehicles break down in the tunnel and will allow TfL to direct emergency services to specific incidents whilst helping them deal with any potential disruption more rapidly.

London Mayor Boris Johnson said: "It will be of huge relief to drivers who use the tunnel that we can finally bring the overnight closures to an end and I am very pleased that TfL have been able to do so over a year ahead of schedule. One of the reasons the tunnel is a notorious traffic hotspot is due to the number of times over-height vehicles try to scrape their way through. Last year a whopping 83 per cent of closures were for that reason and we hope the new trial over-height lane will greatly reduce the number of such incidents."

Finishing these hugely disruptive works over one year early does deserve praise, so well done to TfL and its contractor BAM Nuttall. The scale of refurbishment works carried out is such that a similar programme of work within the tunnel should not be required for another 25 years. So watch out in November 2036!!!



Hopefully the end of queues whilst the northbound bore was being worked on

## AGM REMINDER



All members should have received the *Notice of Annual General Meeting 2011* advising that the meeting will again be held at The HAC, Armoury House, City Road on Sunday 5 February 2012 at 11am.

The meeting this year will consider an agenda *excluding* the election of officers, but *including* as usual, proposed Rule Changes and Propositions.

Any proposed Rule Changes and Propositions must be received at Dial-a-Cab House on or before 09:00hrs on Friday 2nd December 2011 as per the Notice of Annual General Meeting 2011 letter.

Please remember that if you do not vote by post then you should attend. If you do not attend or vote by post, you will be liable for a £50 fine.

**Howard Pears**  
Company Secretary



# Jery's World



Sorry to hear Rudolph has a cold and Santa stayed at the North Pole to look after him, but asking DaC to cover his round doesn't get him account facilities for just one job a year!

Do you want to be kept informed by London Taxis & Private Hire???

## IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS WITH TAXI DRIVERS



We recognise the importance of effective communication with licensed taxi drivers and work hard to ensure that all drivers are fully aware of changes that may affect them, important information and opportunities. While there are many taxi driver associations and taxi trade publications that will helpfully print articles and important information that we need to share with you, we do know that there are many drivers who are not members of any driver association or do not regularly read the taxi trade press.

I am committed to improving communication with drivers as much as possible and whilst direct, written communication to drivers on important issues is probably the only way we can virtually guarantee that drivers are kept informed of key issues, it is of course quite expensive and would need to be funded from licence fees. However, we recognise it as a vital and necessary expense and as a result will be looking to increase the level of direct communication we undertake in the coming year.

In the meantime, we would like to continue to make as full use as possible of the TPH circulation list. There are around 25,000 licensed taxi drivers and only 315 are registered on the circulation list. As I outlined in my recent letter regarding the Olympics, we want to be able to provide regular up to date information on all matters relating to taxi issues and the use of email is a quick and cost effective way of doing this.

**I would be most grateful if Call Sign would share this email with fellow drivers who have access to email and the internet and encourage them to register their email with us via: [TPHEnquiries@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:TPHEnquiries@tfl.gov.uk)**

**John Mason**  
Director - Taxi & Private Hire

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**We make wheels turn  
so you can earn.**



Pic B

Yes, no £20 prizes for Call Sign readers! This month's Christmas competition goes up from its usual £100 prize to a whopping £500! One lucky driver or member of staff will win £500 to spend in time for Christmas.

We have coincided it with the 75th anniversary of the first TV broadcast from Alexandra Palace on 2 November 1936.

We are publishing three photos. All you

To tie in with the 75th anniversary of the first television broadcast...

# WIN £500 IN TIME FOR XMAS!!!



Pic A














Pic C

have to do is to name the TV programmes the shots are taken from. All the correct answers will be put into the hat and one lucky name will be drawn out. Entries must be sent to **Call Sign Xmas competition** at DaC's usual address, emailed or

dropped into Driver Reception by Wednesday 7 December. The winner will be announced in the next issue. Please add your name, callsign (or call taker number) and a contact phone number – as well as the answers! Good luck...

## Martin Cordell & Co. ACCOUNTANTS

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-  A three hundred and sixty five days a year service.
-  A 'nightshift' service.
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**Monday 24 October was nothing unusual. In fact, for most Dial-a-Cab drivers working that day it was pretty insignificant with the first day of half term leaving its usual mark on the trade – one of boredom at the lack of people floating around the capital. But for one DaC driver, it was a day that would stay in his memory for years to come...**

**Gary Beckett (W33J)** was scratching around looking for work that morning among a sea of yellow 'for hire' lights. It wasn't a day for getting bilked – let alone getting turned over twice in addition to witnessing a woman getting run over! Gary picks up the story for *Call Sign*...

"It was around 10.30am. I picked up two Arab boys aged around 18 with their shopping bags and took them to Montrose Court in Exhibition Road. I pulled up with £8.60 on the meter when suddenly both doors opened and the pair ran off in different directions. I just sat there getting all philosophical – getting this year's bilk out of the way etc. I put it down to two young boys on school holidays having what they thought was a laugh – and it was only £8 or so, so why worry! Let's just move on..."

So I reset the meter and drove down Exhibition Road looking at the new road layout – and for a job! I decided to turn round and drive back up towards Hyde Park. Driving back past Montrose Court, I saw one of the two bilkers. He was looking at me, half smiling with a look on his face of *I did ya!* I opened the cab door; he tried legging it but I caught him in a doorway to the Court. He was screaming that he hadn't ever got into the cab. I moved him out onto Exhibition Road so that I could watch my unlocked cab and noted a woman looking round it. The guy still wouldn't give me my money, so I said I'd call the police. I didn't, I just pretended to. On hearing the word police, he tried to run but I grabbed him tightly and he said he'd give me the £8.60 – amazingly for someone who had never been in my cab he knew the exact amount! Taking account of the time I'd been put out, I said I wanted a tenner. He refused and with that the woman who was looking at my cab now stood between the bilker and me.

If anyone watches **Alan Partridge**, just think of his polish girlfriend as this woman looks and sounds just like her! She asked why I was 'harassing this young man' and I quickly said how he had run off without paying and that I wanted my money. She suddenly said she was a lawyer and had looked into my taxi, but as there was no money on the meter how could I prove he owed me anything? Suddenly seizing his chance, the bilker said he had never been in my cab and didn't understand what was going on. I said he had already offered to pay me the £8.60 and asked how she would like being robbed on her way to work, but she wasn't having it. She said she thought I'd stopped the cab, came over to this guy and begun harassing him. I told her what I thought of her synopsis but she told the guy I was harassing him and that he should call the police. She then stood aside and 'bilked junior' duly obliged.

With a crowd building and he playing to it, he smiled and in his best RADA voice declared

*DaC driver Gary Beckett and a day to forget...*

## **“NEVER HAD A DAY LIKE IT IN 30 YEARS!”**



he wanted my badge and registration number! I doubt that he called the police because he panicked when I suggested it. The Polish woman was still standing there, people had come out of the embassy and I certainly looked like public villain number one. I started wondering if this could all go the wrong way!

I calmed down and envisaged a 2-hour police session, so I had no alternative but to give him a sneer, get back into my cab and go back to work. He didn't want the matter to go further for obvious reasons and as I drove off, he gave me a smug wave!

Ah well, at least that was now behind me and the day could only get better... some hopes!

### **My worst day... part 2!**

It was now 7pm and the day hadn't got much busier. Then a ginger-haired girl flagged me down outside St Georges Wharf at Vauxhall. She looked quite normal in a beige-like Burberry mac. At the window she pleasantly asked for Kilburn close to Willesden Lane and in passing added that she lived there with her mum but was in the process of leaving NW6 and moving down to Vauxhall. She has to pick up a few bits and pieces at a time and would be doing it several more times over next few days and weeks. Life story over, she got in the cab but out of nowhere a man jumped in behind her. He's as nice as pie at this stage to me, to *Miss Burberry* and to whomever he was chatting to on the phone.

At Kilburn, she goes to see "mum" while he stays in the cab and tells me they will have to go back to Vauxhall to get the money! He is again very nice and polite, but I just knew then that this was another wrong 'un. I would have said no, but he suddenly began to sound a bit agitated when *Miss Burberry* got back in and spoke to him. They said we'd have to drive to a block of flats nearby in Kilburn, where he got out but left his bags. He "suggested" that I didn't get out of the cab! I soon discovered why when I heard loud arguing and he came running out with 3 black guys armed with knives chasing him. At that point, a huge row started between him and her when she got out briefly and stopped him using a machete – which he had tucked into his trouser leg! He was going wild and it wouldn't have taken much to make him totally explode! There was

around £30 on the clock and I should have pulled away and wiped my mouth, but that moment of indecision allowed the girl to get back in followed quickly by him.

I took the view of keeping quiet and locking the front doors. If I was lucky enough to get paid at the end, I'd take the money through the partition opening. I hadn't kept the doors locked earlier because I thought that he might have been irritated by the action and damaged inside the cab.

As we got to Vauxhall, he directed me into a street off Kennington Lane. The road is 50 yards long and he says he lives in the "nice" flats behind Pitch Black Green.

There was £60+ on the meter as they both got out. Even though the front was locked, they made no attempt to come round and he just stared at me as they both walked away from me across the green. Unlike the morning bilk, I made no attempt to run after them. Both the cab and I were in one piece and that was worth losing £60. I won't be picking them up again though and because I suspect they have done it before, I'm describing the pair to **Dial-a-Cab** drivers just in case.

**She is white and ginger-haired; he is either a light-skinned West Indian or possibly a half-caste male. They apparently live in flats somewhere behind Pitch Black Green behind the Vauxhall Tavern pub (under the bridge at Vauxhall).**

I have to wonder whether *Call Sign* could publicise the question of asking for payment up front, particularly as regards the legal aspect. I had a feeling that had I asked this fella for cash up front, the reply would have been that it was because he was black. At that time, I had no idea he was tooled up with a machete! It would be interesting to know what the position is with putting up a polite notice in the cab asking for cash up front? The sign could read:

*At the start of the journey, please advise the driver if you are paying by cash or credit card. For cash rides estimated as coming to over £15, the driver may ask for payment in advance.*

### **And finally...**

The day was unreal and I can honestly say that I have never had day like it in 30 years. Besides the two bilks, I witnessed a woman get run over right in front of me. She was thrown around 6feet into the air, but amazingly just got up!

And as a bonus to this incredible day that I'm still not sure wasn't just a bad dream, a man jumped into the cab in the dark at traffic lights. When I looked round, he's got this massive Staff crossed with a Bullmastiff and proceeded to tell me how he was going to the Park where he lets it off the lead to get other dogs! Smiling, he added that his dog was ok with girls but hated blokes. Another loony! Surely I'd already had my fill for one day!!!"

**Gary Beckett (W33J)**



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This cab trade has been fighting for its right to survive since long before 19 June 1961 when you could suddenly dial WELbeck 0561 and a red Renault Dauphine would arrive from Welbeck Motors, a car rental firm that overnight became the face of the minicab. It made its law graduate MD, Michael Gotla, the most hated man in the licensed taxi trade as he advertised minicabs to go anywhere for 1 shilling (5p) a mile and undercutting the taxi trade's meter charges.

Now we have to a certain degree learned to live with the more reputable minicab firms, but have found a new enemy in the pedicab. But this time it has nothing to do with price, because some of their charges to gullible tourists are nothing short of a rip-off.

Our biggest problem is one often shared by all other vehicles on the road - the way pedicabs do whatever they want, be that going the wrong way down one-way streets or stopping for long periods on zigzag lines with parking attendants just walking straight past them while often then stopping at a **Dial-a-Cab** driver who is innocently waiting for his or her fare to come down.

DaC driver **Alex Constantinou (N05)** recently told *Call Sign* about an incident outside the Selfridges rank in Oxford Street.

**"I had been on point for a few minutes but couldn't pull right up to the front because a pedicab was parked on the zigzag lines just at the point where our rank markings began. Had I pulled up further, I would have been blocked in. So I got out and "asked" the pedicab rider to move away as it was illegal to stop there. He just stared at me and did nothing. I am fully trained in martial arts but decided that one moment of satisfaction would do**

# DO THE POLICE CARE???



Alex's picture of the pedicab on Selfridges zigzags

my livelihood a substantial amount of damage! But I did take a photo, although he didn't seem to be overly worried but did move forward slightly!

Just then, a police car was situated on the westbound carriageway but not moving in the usual Oxford Street traffic hold-ups. So I ran over and asked if they could tell the pedicab driver to move as he was

taking no notice of me! I was astonished when they said they were too busy and just continued talking to each other! What chance do we have if wardens and the police can't be bothered. As a regular reader, I know that LTPH Director John Mason reads *Call Sign*, so perhaps he has a suggestion because I have run out of ideas...???"

Buying or renting? The debate takes another turn...

## CAB RENTALS SET FOR BIG RISES

While in the last full year - 2009 /10 - inflation rose by only 4.6%, some taxi insurance premiums are now increasing by 30% a year... and in many cases much more. One fleet proprietor whose fleet have a good claims experience that would have meant a decrease in past premiums, have seen them increase by £400 per year per cab!

Another with not such a good claims experience saw an increase of £1,000 a cab.

*Ivan Kovler, Chairman of the London Motor Cab Proprietors Association (LMCPA)* said: **"Many fleets have not increased taxi rentals over the last five years, but in that time we have seen more than a 100% increase in the road fund licence (£445), increased rent and business rates and now what is becoming a year on year huge increase in insurance premiums. Even fleets with good claims histories will have to increase rentals by £10 a week including VAT and even that won't totally cover the insurance rise. Fleets showing a bad claims history will need to put up rents by a lot more in order to cover costs."**

One fleet said they had paid £375 per cab in 1997 and it had risen to around £1,000 in 2010. The Bank of England inflation calculator showed inflation averaging 2.7% a year during that period, which means a premium of £375 in 1997 should have risen to just £532.29p in 2010. When compared to current prices, it shows that insurance premiums are about double the amount they would have been expected to be at with inflation taken into account in 1997.

The LMCPA claim that combined with older taxis having to come off the road due to the 15 year age limit, the insurance increase will mean a number of fleets going out of business as they will not have the cabs or money to continue...

### Ken Livingstone: "Let taxis use ORN lanes!"



According to London Mayoral candidate, **Ken Livingstone**, London's 25,000 licensed taxis should be allowed to use the Olympic Route Network - the so-called *Zil lanes* - which

according to the Olympic organisers must be reserved for official Olympic traffic only.

Mr Livingstone called on **Mayor Boris Johnson** to reconsider the ban on taxi drivers using the priority lanes, which form a third of the 100-mile+ 2012 Olympic network.

The next Mayoral election is scheduled for May, around 6 weeks before the Games begin and according to Mr Livingstone, Boris should act now to avoid months of gridlock and millions in lost revenue next summer. He didn't go so far as to say that if he won, he would order the ORNs withdrawal.

The name *Zil lanes* is said to come from the ZIL-4104, an elite Russian limousine that served as an upmarket transport system for the few rich classes of the-then Soviet Union. Just fifty of them were produced each year and they were granted exclusive use of the outside lane on highways - the same system as the ORNs are said to be using.



I think it was in the late sixties that another *London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children* committee member and I were invited to meet the Manchester taxi drivers and go on their outing to Blackpool for an exchange of ideas. We travelled to Blackpool and were pleased to meet a man called Jimmy Savile who was really great on the day, with big crowds cheering him on. The Blackpool taxis were decorated in a way we could only dream of and we copied lots of their ideas. We also invited Jim to come along on our annual outing to Southend.

The first time he came, he was driving his white Rolls Royce and joined the Southend convoy, waving to everyone and was a huge attraction. Everyone just loved him.

The night before, I had arranged for him to stop in a retirement home, which was on one side of the square our trip was starting from. He was great fun and mixed in with us all. We even got *The People* newspaper to put up on every other lamp post a notice saying that Jimmy Savile and the taxis were at Southend and to come and meet him!

The second time he went on the Southend trip, I asked our Hon Secretary to make arrangements for Jimmy to again sleep overnight at the retirement home and when I asked Jim if he had been in to confirm the arrangements, he told me he'd seen the Matron and they were putting him up the night before the outing. In passing, I mentioned that she was a nice lady with blonde hair but he quickly said that she had black hair and was looking forward to his visit! Bells began ringing and we soon realised that he was booked into the nurse's home on the wrong side of the square!

We rebooked him into the retirement home, but during the night of his stay the fire alarm

DaC driver and LTFUC President, Bill Tyzack BEM, looks back at...

# The LTFUC and Sir Jimmy Savile



cheque for his hospital sponsoring.

I went to see him in his BBC long running *Jim'll Fix It* show and he was most generous. He also went to the retirement home he had stopped at and gave them money for a big party just before Xmas. This went on for a number of years.

went off at 3am and firemen knocked on every door to make sure everything was ok. When Jim came to the door with his shorts on and a large cigar in his mouth, the fireman called his mate over saying: "Have a look at this one, he looks like that Jim on the TV!" One elderly lady smiled about Jimmy Savile landing up in an old person's home like this one was!

Jimmy also went on the *London Taxi Benevolent Association's* outing to Worthing and the taxi trade presented him with a

How Sir Jimmy Savile became the first real DJ and all from being a *Bevin Boy* is another story. But there are not too many celebrities who will help you for days on end like this man did. Thank you for your time Sir Jimmy; there will only ever be one *Jim'll Fix It*

The LTFUC send their sincere condolences to his family...

**Bill Tyzack BEM (C06)**  
**LTFUC Hon President**

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As the first taxi apps makes their entrance,  
DaC's Jon Robinson asks...

# Apps? What 'appens next!!!

So, after much hype including articles in some of the Sunday supplements, the app brigade have arrived on the London Taxi scene with **HailO**, backed by venture capital companies *Atomico* and *Wellington Partners* and **GetTaxi**, which began its life in Israel with a \$9.5million investment. Strangely for London's 'black' taxi trade, both new apps have yellow for their colour of choice!

HailO say drivers pay "only a small commission" – although 10% seems quite a lot to me - for each job dispatched via their system. There are no run-ins on these trips and a five minute waiting period on arrival before the meter goes on. Handy for restaurant jobs so that the customer can settle their bill first and perhaps finish their drink while the driver waits unpaid! However, there are no subscriptions for the driver and no charge to any account clients - no doubt the driver is paying for that in substantially lower fares.

**GetTaxi** say in their ads that winning cash work back lost by the radio circuits to **Addison Lee** and other PHV companies is their aim, yet when I read the advertorial in some of the trade papers, it says that they have "arrived" and that City law firms are opening accounts! They even include a German bank that is a long-standing **Dial-a-Cab** client and say they have "signed contracts" with them! However, from what I hear not only is that news to the bank, but they are also rather irritated at untrue stories circulating about them!

Even the RAC Club with its well-stocked two cab rank on its doorstep has appar-

ently signed up! Perhaps I'm missing something here, but all the names mentioned seem to be good customers of the London Cab trade already! Take back from private hire? Hmm...

GetTaxi drivers pay £5 per week and 10% of any account fare or £1 for any cash ride. Not sure if they too start with a dead clock, because that and a 10% discount sounds like minicab rates. Or perhaps that's where we're heading?

*The GetTaxi technology is said to have cost some \$2million, but with institutional investment let's hope that doesn't include a PLC with shares in a large private hire company!*

So back to HailO; the first 50,000 jobs are said to be offered free to drivers, so I wonder how much a job is going to cost after that? They claim it is *another string to your bow*. Does that mean they don't mind you being fitted to DaC and using their app to pick up ours, yours or their customers?

I know their sales teams have been into many of our accounts. I took one of our account clients to their launch event and he told me that DaC should also offer an app because he had to open an account with those 'black people carriers from Camden' so that his son can get to school via the app - even though the client claims he detests that company! I tell him I'm pretty sure DaC offer an app facility. He looks amazed!

There are also some others apps around,

but they seem to be losing the battle to the big two. One runs alongside private hire companies that allow passengers a choice of 4 prices!

With some of the taxi apps expecting you to arrive on a dead clock with a then 5-minute free waiting time and with it coming up to Christmas, coverage could be problematic and actually paint the trade as being unreliable. There are also said to be fixed prices at much reduced rates to get you home. It may sound fantastic news for those that use licensed taxis, but it sounds like a price war to me and I really don't think there is too much chance of winning back work from the PH trade via the new taxi apps - after all, PH will just cut prices even more and as we know, their drivers must do what they are told.

*So in ending, I must ask the Board at DaC whether I should worry. Can I use my smart phone to sign up to two or three of these apps while still at DaC? Will we - indeed can we - carry on and wait for the recession to end and expect our old customers to flood back? Perhaps we can change the way we bill our customers for certain types of trip so that they match the way PH do theirs showing an all-in-one price? With 'roaders' becoming rarer and fixed prices apparently not an answer, the question has to be whether indeed there is an answer???*

Jon Robinson (E88)

## MBH New Group Finance Director

LTI parent company **Manganese Bronze Holdings**, have announced the appointment of **Peter Johansen** as Group Finance Director. He joins the company from 1 December having previously held that position at Brintons Carpets Limited since 2005, playing an instrumental role in establishing its new factory in Suzhou, China.

He has wide experience of international global businesses gained while working previously for Jotun A/S and MacDermid plc. Mr Johansen has a BSc (Hons) degree in International Banking and Finance and an MBA from the London Business School. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

MBH Chairman **Tim Melville-Ross** said: "I am delighted that Peter Johansen is joining us and I believe that he will make a significant contribution to the future success of MBH."

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# Allen Togwell's Marketing Place

Many years ago when I was at school, our teacher at the start of a lesson that he knew many of the scruffy herberts in the class found boring, to get our attention he would start with a totally different subject such as football or sex (biology for idiots) and it nearly always worked. If it didn't, we would get a whack on the back of our head with an old slipper. In later years, I've often used that ploy myself to get DaC members attention when writing articles in **Call Sign**. But instead of football or sex, I find writing something contentious often does the trick.

## Taxi v Call Sign!

In this instance it relates to reading matter. I know I've mentioned this subject before, in fact not that long ago, but two events recently prompted me to raise it again. The first concerns an email sent to me by an irate DaC member slagging me off for an issue that didn't involve me at all. He sent it to the wrong person! The second event was a campaign undertaken by the *Evening Standard*. As you all know, I do two days a week in the office and as I arrive at DaC House around 07:30, I have to use the driver's entrance and by doing so I'm able to collect the latest copy of *Taxi* - you all know that trade paper as it says at the top *more readers than the rest put together*, adding in bold quotation marks: *Ask any driver*. And as that's you, who am I to argue? In fact if I was to argue about something that is read more than any other, I guess I could say the same about *Yellow Pages*! If you like trivia, I could say it was first produced in 1886, is printed in 75 countries and read by billions! Big deal!

But there lies the anomaly, because like *Taxi*, for what purpose is *Yellow Pages* read? Not I would think for enjoyment. On the day in question, I'd picked up a copy of *Taxi* at the same time as a copy of **Call Sign** had landed on my desk, so I put them both in my briefcase for that evening's reading. I began with *Taxi* and then **Call Sign**. When finished, I was curious as to why I had read *Taxi* so quickly? The reason was the surprising shortage of actual reading matter. So I grabbed a pencil and added together the various quarters and half pages of dialogue to make a whole page and the result? Out of *Taxi*'s 47 pages there were just 8 pages of actual reading matter in total, the remainder was advertising. **Call Sign** by comparison had 35 pages of which 31 pages were reading matter and the remainder consisted of the odd advert, Jerry's cartoon and a few announcements. So may I make a suggestion; in future after reading **Call Sign**, leave it in your regular watering hole and let your fellow cabmen read a proper truly interesting and enjoyable trade magazine that might not have the most readers, but by golly it will last throughout their whole meal and not just through the first sip of tea... Ouch!

## Reeding and riting!

Right, that's got the little dig out of the way and



I hope I now have your attention. With regards the irate member, even though it didn't concern me I still find it odd how certain people put their grievances into print, yet totally ignore the damage done to their argument by not taking care over the grammar or spelling. Grammar is not really a big issue, particularly in this instance as every other word was effing and everything was in lower case, but spelling certainly is.

So what has this got to do with the *Evening Standard*? The answer to that is on the very day I received the somewhat abusive missive, came news of a campaign the ES was running on *Get London Reading*. There are apparently 1.1 million adults in England with a reading age lower than that of a typical 7-year-old. For them, reading road signs, taking in the instructions on a medicine bottle or simply writing their name is a hardship. Many try to hide their lack of ability even from partners or children, often claiming to have forgotten non-existent glasses. When those whose literacy is so poor they could not keep up with an average 11-year-old are taken into account, the number rises to 5.2 million, or almost one in six of all 16 to 65-year-olds.

Those of you who follow Rugby Union will know of **Scott Quinnell**. By the time he was 32 and had hung up his boots, Scott Quinnell had played rugby union for Llanelli 146 times, captained Wales, gained 52 caps and scored 11 international tries. He had even been chosen to play for the British Lions in Australia in 2001. Yet on the day he decided to retire, undisputed Welsh hero Quinnell still only had the reading age of a 7-year-old. His poor writing and spelling meant that his wife had to fill in cheques for him. When the sports star decided to tackle the first book in the *Harry Potter* series in his late 20s, it took him two months to complete the 223 pages.

One in four children is leaving school unable to read, write and do maths adequately enough to apply for a job. This is a disgrace and much of the blame lays on the shoulders of parents and grandparents. I would guess that the majority of our members are of an age that have children who have children of their own. How many of those children and grandchildren were read to every night after being put to bed? Very few it seems. How many of you have given books for Christmas and birthday gifts? Again very few it seems.

Is it any wonder then that we see children leaving school in the UK in search of work who are being pushed to the back of the queue by young people from Eastern Europe, Asia and China who believe it or not, can read, write and speak English better than 30% of children born in this country! And the simple reason for this is because our parents and grandparents have not encouraged their children to take an interest in reading books, but preferred instead to shower them with electronic gadgets, PCs, mobiles, iPods or whatever and allow children as young as 7/8 onto *Facebook* so they can communicate with their friends in a language that to me looks like a cross between the enigma code and Chinese.

What chance then will those young people have of filling in a simple job application form? I mention this now because Christmas will soon be upon us and with it the usual list of gifts from the *Argos* catalogue that can burn a hole deep into your pockets. You have the ideal opportunity to break with tradition, save yourself money and do your children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces a valuable service in the process by supporting the *Evening Standard* campaign to 'Get London Reading' by buying book vouchers as Christmas and birthday gifts. In addition, of course, you can even help yourselves if you are amongst the thousands of adults who suffer from dyslexia, by taking up reading as a hobby.

## Olympics and home

Some of you may know I live in Blackheath near Greenwich Park where the 2012 Olympics committee morons have decided to stage the Equestrian event. Those of you who travel through Greenwich to work will know that rarely a week goes by when the area isn't gridlocked due to a blockage in the Blackwall Tunnel. I dread to think what it will be like during the Olympic Games. The road I live in is free parking. This is soon to change and what is also soon to change are parking fines. At present it's £80. All London councils are proposing to raise this to £200. Greenwich Council however, no doubt urged on by the green party who would have us living in caves if they had their way, think differently. They believe £200 would not act as a sufficient deterrent and want to increase the fine to £1000. Where on earth do they find these people who sit on councils and make such ridiculous decisions? Lunatic Asylums? So be warned, should any of you dare venture into Greenwich and I'm told, Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets from July 2012 and find yourself in desperate need to park - perhaps even to go to the loo which could easily happen if you are stuck for hours in traffic - and you get a parking fine, it's going to be the most expensive pee of your life.

*Have a very peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year...*

**Allen Togwell**  
**DaC Marketing**



# BARRIE STRIKES AGAIN!

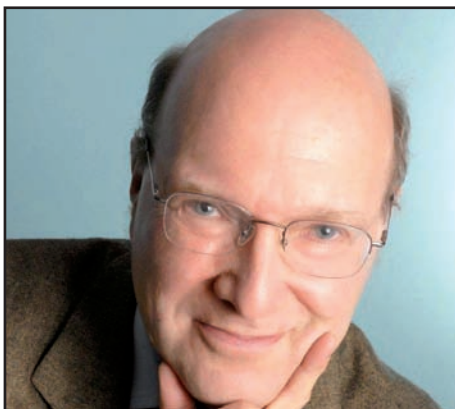
**Dial-a-Cab's** amazing *Penalty Charge Notice* warrior, **Barrie Segal**, made yet another visit to the Adjudicator's "court" at the Angel recently, this time arguing against the validity of Westminster's CCTV cameras. He went representing three DaC drivers and came away with three victories!

Last month's *Call Sign* told how on just one Saturday, Barrie went with 46 DaC PCNs and won 43 of them – having decided that the other three were too risky and should he have lost them, they could set precedents. With his record, that would have appeared to have been unlikely anyway, but Barrie knows every single thing there is to know about appealing PCNs.

The latest batch also took place on a Saturday and because all three cases were similar, *Call Sign* is reporting on just one of them. This one involved **Paul Shakeshaft (P52)**.

Paul has been in the magazine several times following his ongoing battles with Westminster parking tickets. In fact the only time he has appeared when PCNs were not mentioned was in 2004 when he completed the London Marathon!

This latest PCN went back to last December. It was 08:47 at Crawford Place W1 and Paul received a PCN for £120 after a CCTV operator spotted Paul's cab *parked in a restricted street*. We all know what Westminster mean by *parked*, but that is irrelevant in this case. Barrie Segal's case for



all three DaC drivers was that no VCA Approved Device Certificate for the particular camera had been produced.

The bottom line was that Westminster's certificate stated "camera DVTel 9840" as the device in question whereas Mr Segal pointed out to the Adjudicator that the correct code was not 9840 but 9840A. A previous appeal had set a precedent where Westminster Council had conceded that without a copy of the Approved Device Certificate, there was a missing evidential link and that case was then withdrawn – another reason why Barrie is careful not to set precedents!

As a result, Adjudicator Carl Teper allowed the appeal put forward by Barrie Segal and cancelled the Penalty Charge Notice and the Notice to Owner. He added that he found Westminster's explanation

that DVTel 9840 was merely an abbreviation of DVTel9840A to be 'weak and unconvincing'. He said he could find no reason why the full camera details could not appear on the certification and as a result was not satisfied that there was a VCA Approved Device Certificate for that particular camera.

As a result, three DaC drivers had broad grins on their faces because even though DaC would have paid their fines, Westminster's CCTV victimisation of taxis has put that council on top of the unpopularity list.

Barrie told *Call Sign*: "The fact that these 3 DaC cases show that Westminster Council does not have a valid certification for their cameras means that they cannot lawfully issue parking tickets using these cameras. The Council must stop using those cameras immediately and cancel all parking tickets issued as a result of their use. They should also refund all parking tickets paid by motorists who were caught believing the cameras were legal."

***If you are on a DaC trip when getting a PCN (provided it isn't for parking on the kerb or stopping on zigzag lines), then your ticket cost will be refunded, but if not or you are in your own car, then Barrie's website could well assist you win your appeal. He is the founder of [www.appealnow.com](http://www.appealnow.com) - the only website in the world where you can appeal your parking ticket online in 4 1/2 minutes.***

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# LOOKING AT (TAXI) LIFE

with Tom Quigley (Y33)

## Queuing isn't working...

Those of us who remember the *Saatchi* advert proclaiming that *Labour isn't working* will remember the iconic image of a large queue of people applying for

jobs. Today, in these times of austerity, it is almost ironic as we once again face the spectre of large numbers of unemployed (albeit not hidden in other statistics) that those who are actually in that position now form large queues to spend or access their money in those large corporate companies that are behind the current climate!

During lunch breaks at every bank, post office and even ATMs, we are met by queues due to not enough staff being employed or insufficient funds in the cash dispensers. The design of banks would give you a clue as to how they have disregard for queues; how often do you go to a bank that will have several cubicles to discuss the latest saving or insurance promotion, an ATM inside, more chairs to sit on than there are teller's windows – of which one is usually closed! Then there's management staff in smart suits asking as you stand there if they can help save you queuing by going to an automatic paying-in machine?

"Yes," you want to shout out, "open another window!"

Go to any large DIY or department store and you have to search around for assistance from some poor employee on minimum hourly wage who has to deal with irate customers frustrated from queuing for their attention – only to be answered with a *sorry we're short of staff* answer or that the person who deals with that department is away.

Customer service sections are contradictory to the whole concept of their existence! Most of these have insufficient numbers of staff to service the customers. God help if you have to collect a letter from a sorting office on a Saturday, guaranteed there will only be one member of staff. You also have to bring various forms of ID to prove who you are! I would have thought the sheer fact that someone would stand for half an hour to collect an underpaid/oversized birthday card with their name on it would be enough proof!

If you need to phone a company, you are met by a recording: "Sorry, but due to high demand all our advisors are busy." Add to that the usual fact that our call is important to them – but obviously not that important.

It is estimated that the average person will spend 67 hours a year queuing, which is almost three days. Assuming we only queue when awake and discount that time, probably 25% of that would be leisure queuing (if there is such a thing) ie in a bar or a concert etc. That still leaves approx 50 hours of work time queuing, which in reality means that every working person loses over a week of their working life every year.

As individual companies strive to make savings, surely it's time for government to take stock of the larger picture and invest in making sure more people are employed to reduce this total waste and drain on the economy.

## Getting the economy moving.

In this time of austerity for some, we look to *Captains of Industry* to drive the economy forward. There are those with natural moneymaking skills, others are educated at the best universities and schools the world has to offer. So what is involved in the quest to squeeze money from our wallets and encourage spending and what about the annoying stupid questions that these brainy educated sales management teams ask their poor staff on the front line to endure.

Buy a newspaper and you are met with a *do you want a book of stamps or a bar of chocolate with that?* In my local chip shop, the staff have to ask if we want mushy peas with our order even if someone is only buying a soft drink. If they don't, apparently they have to give you some mushy peas and the assistant probably receives a reprimand. Then there is *do you want a bag for life*, under the subtle guise of saving the planet (whilst they hide the takeaway bags under the counter), but that 10p is obviously handy.

For some time now, I have been putting in £20 worth of fuel in my taxi to get me going. At one time, this would have got me through into the next day but alas those times are now gone. Even the £20 seems to be impossible to achieve. No matter what service station I fill up at the pump never stops at £20 exactly! I have tried and tried slowing the filling process down as it gets to £19.98/99, but as soon as I go that minuscule further it always goes to £20.01p.

So I have come to the conclusion that £20 would probably be an average amount of fuel to fill up with and therefore, I wonder if the fuel companies are deliberately calibrating the pumps to never stop at exactly £20 to generate a huge amount of daily income? Spread across the 9,000 petrol stations in the country, this is definitely a way of looking after the pennies and the pounds look after themselves – but for them and not us!

*Have a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year...*

## Albert Bridge reopens!



After almost two years of heavy congestion caused by the closure of Albert Bridge, it finally reopens on Friday 2 December. It closed in February 2010 and at one point looked as though it would stay closed until next autumn.

At a cost of £7.2million, the bridge should now be as good as new having taken 10,000 bolts and some 40,000 litres of paint...

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*Every issue of Call Sign takes a look back at ODRTS history through the pages of the magazines of the time with a flashback*

# DIAL-A-CAB FLASHBACK

***This month's Flashback returns to Christmas 1957 and The Star, a London evening newspaper that was running a story about ODRTS...***

***From The Star, December 1957***

## A Taxi Success Story

London cab company, the *Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service*, are based in a former bakery situated on the Pentonville Road. Run by more than 250 drivers who take turns at answering any of the three telephones or sending radio broadcast calls to drivers via a Marconi two-way dispatch system, they have grown year on year.

Their elected Chairman is a Londoner from Edgware, Bonnie Martyn, and in the year's most unlikely success story, he will be taking leave from ODRTS for at least 12 months having been approached to go to the sunshine isle of Bermuda and introduce a taxi company with two-way radio over there.

He has already organised the installation

of Pye 'Reporter' radios into 12 Austin A55s that he is taking with him and which will be used as taxis in Bermuda.

His drive and initiative were recognised in 1953 when ODRTS was founded and he was made Chairman. He is said to be largely responsible for the sound position of that organisation and we understand that many foreign visitors have visited the London operation and Bonnie has been able to advise many prospective users.

Mr and Mrs Martyn leave for Bermuda via New York on the Queen Mary on December 28th and the London cab trade will be turning out in force to wish them God-speed.



## THEATRE REVIEW THEATRE REVIEW

by Tom Whitbread

### Rock of Ages

I was lucky enough to have acquired two tickets for the new musical **Rock of Ages** from the Editor of this magazine who asked me to review what has been acclaimed as a surprising musical hit!

As we descended the stairs to the auditorium of the Shaftsbury Theatre, the loud rock music that had taken over the 1980's music scene could be heard. Then as we entered the auditorium to take our seats, there was a light show that would enliven even the most weary office worker!

The scene was set on stage with Sunset Strip, the Bourbon bar and the Strip Club. This was apart from other name boards that adorned the outside of the audience boxes. You did not have to just sit looking at a bland curtain in semi-darkness waiting for the performance to begin; from the moment you entered you were feeling the joy and music of that era.

**My wife and I took our seats waiting to be entertained by the advertised 31 songs and well-performed dance routines. We were not to be disappointed.**

As the first song hit us, the volume almost lifted me out of my seat and then pushed me back with the force you get on a jet airliner take-off! This non-stop entertainment continued right through to the interval, when we took a well-earned rest to regain our breath. God knows how the cast recuperated!

Unusually during the interval, you didn't even have to leave your seat to purchase a drink, as young ladies in very short cut-off denim jeans were parading up and down the aisles with cool bags selling drinks - alcoholic or otherwise. I think there were also young men completing the same task, but I didn't really notice!

The two stars, **Justin Lee Collins** and **Shayne Ward** handled their roles very entertainingly and professionally, but anyone who has read my past theatre reviews will know that I also look out for the backing and up and coming stars of any show I see.

**Simon Lipkin** who plays Lonny put on a wonderful performance. He supplied a reason to join in and laugh at his comical additions to the show. To me, making an audience laugh after they have spent what could have been a very boring day at work must be one of the hardest tasks you can ask a performer to complete, yet Simon did this with expertise.

**Amy Pemberton** as the star struck Sherrie and **Oliver Tompsett** as Drew the wannabe rock singer, also gave commendable performances. They were backed up by the very energetic dancers in eye catching costumes.

If you do put your hand in your pocket to extract money for tickets, you will not be disappointed if you love rock music as I do. Another singer who gives a memorable performance is the black strip club owner, **Rachel McFarlane**, a lady whose gospel music voice is something to listen out for during this fast and furious show. There are other talented performances but space is limited.

Rock of Ages has audience participation, arms doing a Mexican style wave, holding torches while silver and gold streamers rain down. As well as performers in the audience area, I had Shayne Ward laying in the aisle next to me and I had to restrain my wife at this point - although what she sees in Shayne when she has me is something of a mystery!

If you want to take your loved one out for a meal and an enlivening show, this is the one for you!



**Justin Lee Collins (long hair in centre) and the Rock of Ages cast**

Life can bite you on the bum at times as two young men driving through London found when **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Barry Spear (Y16)** spotted their Bluesmobile – fitted out with the huge Blues Brothers siren on its roof - looking rather sad after breaking down close to Harrods.

The original Bluesmobile came from the hugely successful **Blues Brothers** movie, where **John Belushi** and **Dan Aykroyd** brought hapless brothers Jake and Elwood Blues to life with their former police car that seemed to be able to do almost anything. Sadly, these two young men driving through London who were going to show off their pride and joy to the world, looked rather silly as they waited for the AA.

Ah well, we've all been there, which means we don't quite feel so bad when smiling at others' misfortune!

## BLUES BROTHERS STOP IN LONDON

More to wait for the AA than to sing!



Amazing how silly a brilliant Bluesmobile can look when broken down!

## VACANCY FOR AN ARBITRATOR



There is a vacancy for one DaC subscriber to become an Arbitrator. Should you wish to put your name forward and you meet the minimum criteria of five consecutive year's membership, then please apply in writing expressing your interest, to be received by me

at Dial-a-Cab House no later than first post on Monday 12 December 2011.

A postal ballot will then be conducted at a later date and the candidate with the highest number of votes will be duly appointed.

Candidates wishing to send their CV for publication in *Call Sign* should send it to the Editor either by post or email by Friday 9 December 2011, keeping to a maximum of around 200 words.

If you have any queries regarding this process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Howard Pears**  
Company Secretary

## Robot Month at the Science Museum

From 1 to 31 December, the Science Museum will be taken over by robots! Beginning with *Robotville* over 4 days, the museum will showcase the latest and greatest in European robotic research and development. As well as talks from roboticists who will demonstrate their work, the Museum is displaying over 20 unique robots, many of which have just come out of the research lab and will be on show to the British public for the first time. Within six zones, there'll be domestic robots, expressive robots, swarming robots, swimming robots, exploring robots, humanoid robots, learning robots and many more.

Robotville begins the Science Museum's month long celebration of robots throughout December, consisting of talks with experts, robot workshops, Q&As with curators, art installations and multimedia and much more all the way up to the New Year. Entrance to the exhibition is free.

There is, of course, much more as well at the museum including *Electroboutique Pop up* where a giant distorted iPhone, a padded TV that changes picture when someone hits it and a digital mirror TV that shows viewers their own teleportrait reflection assembled from different TV channel streams! This one is also free.

There are many other exhibitions also on at the Science Museum plus the magical 3D experience of the IMAX theatre (charges apply).

The Science Museum at Exhibition Road is open daily from 10.00 to 18.00 (not 24-26 Dec).

More info at 0870 870 4868 or go to [www.sciencemuseum.org.uk](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk)



A look at the future???

**Critically acclaimed new British restaurant has launched a brilliant incentive for licensed London taxi drivers**

Bring 10 individual reservations, receive £50 voucher to spend at the Restaurant

Bring a further 10 individual reservations, receive £100 voucher to spend at the Restaurant

Register your details with your driver number at the Restaurant or by email or telephone

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**Dial-a-Cab Marshal Steve Tyson (V99)** was recently involved in what could have turned into an ugly incident when marshalling outside Drapers Hall in the City where the charity **Poppy Ball** was taking place. With diners having shelled out £500 a ticket, disturbances were the one thing organisers didn't want. Inside the hall was **Mike Harris (F79)**, but he had no clue what was about to happen outside.

Steve has been on DaC for over 15 years and in addition to driving and marshalling, he has been a dispatcher in the call centre. So as the old saying goes, he knows what's what – and he needed to on that night when a group of drunken louts “insisted” on getting into one of the 6 booked taxis waiting outside the venue. Steve takes up the story...

“A group of people – including a girl – came up to us and asked for a taxi. One of them had fallen over and looked totally dishevelled, but the entire group looked to be drunk. I tried to explain that all the cabs were booked but it's a waste of time when people have obviously drunk too much. Their attitude then turned nasty. One of our drivers, **Dave Willett (T27)** saw what was happening and got out of his cab to make sure I was ok and the others soon followed. I told them to get back in their cabs because I

### Rumpus at the £500-a-head Poppy Ball

## DAC MARSHALLS SORT IT OUT!



**DaC Marshal Steve Tyson**

assumed the group would just go away. But they didn't and seeing me with a two-way radio in my hand seemed to make me their target. I walked away from them but they followed me and kept shouting about wanting a cab because their friend had fallen over – probably in a drunken stupor. I tried explaining again that the taxis were booked and that they should call for an ambulance if he had been hurt, but it was pointless. Then one of them pushed me. The other drivers saw what was happening and came quickly back out of their cabs and literally pushed the drunks out of the way! With that, the group seemed to give up and walked off.

“Soon all the drivers bar one had pulled off with their jobs, but suddenly the group returned and began hassling me again. This time I just called the police and they came in record time! They asked what was happening and what I wanted them to do! I explained it was a charity event and these people were threatening to cause disruption and even though I knew it was because they had been drinking, nevertheless they did push me and without the other drivers stepping in who knows what might have happened! It was already a technical assault. I asked the police whether they could perhaps “encourage” the group not to do it again without actually having to charge them. The next thing I saw was the police holding these trouble-makers against the wall and judging by the drunks faces, putting the fear of God into them! I certainly wouldn't want to do anything wrong in front of the City police! But I have to say they were really good and the group walked off into the night with the proverbial flea in the ear and never returned.

“But I really would like to thank all the drivers who helped me out on that evening. It really was nice of them because no one knew whether these kids had weapons or were looking for a fight. So my sincere thanks...”

## MBH recruits Geely car dealers!

**London Taxi Company** holding company, **Manganese Bronze Holdings**, are looking to recruit UK dealers to sell cars made by their Chinese partner **Geely**. The number required is said to be around fifty. Chief executive **John Russell** will be speaking to interested dealers in the next week or so with a view to holding a formal presentation of the Geely brand.

The first two cars to be sold are said to be derivatives of the Toyota Corolla sized Emgrand EC718 and will be sold entirely separately from the London Taxi Company's TX4.

Geely formed a joint venture with Manganese Bronze Holdings in 2007, taking a 52 per cent stake in **Shanghai LTI Automobile**, which produces the cab in China.

## THE SALIERI RESTAURANT

376 Strand, WC2

We Invite Dial-a-Cab drivers and their guests to our restaurant where you can partake of the finest food and wine

And as a thank-you for helping our clients come and go over the years, we are happy to be able to offer you a genuine 25% discount on your bill

*We are certain that you will be delighted*



Please bring along your badge or Bill as ID

**Salieri Restaurant**  
376 Strand, WC2

**Reservations: 020 7836 1318**

# COMPLIANCE OFFICER'S REPORT



*Hello Ladies & Gents,*

## Trouble at mill ... or the Poppy Ball!

The festive season is now fast approaching and the demand for our services should be at its highest. As with most years, there will be a number of Marshalled events over this period at which we will need your usual high level of support.

Many of you will remember helping out at one such an event a few weeks ago – *The Poppy Ball*. Although there is mention of this

event elsewhere in this edition of *Call Sign*, I would still like to thank the members who supported our Marshal (Steve) on a night when a number of young guys, who were more than a little worse for wear, decided to cause trouble. I hasten to add they had nothing whatsoever to do with this high profile event, but they outnumbered Steve. But with his professionalism and the support of you, his fellow drivers, a situation that could have turned nasty was in the main prevented. Well done to all who helped, it was appreciated.

## Run-ins

You will have seen on your terminal screens that due to client feedback, run-ins are being strictly monitored. Please ensure that no more than the allowed run in of £4.20 is showing on your meter at the time of arrival and just as important, at the actual booked time on pre-booked journeys. In this economic environment, it is imperative that we not only offer clients high levels of service but arrive and PoB with the correct amounts showing on the meter.

## Eurostar – Bay 6

A number of drivers have contacted the Editor,

concerned with the long period of time it can take to leave the pick-up bay at the Eurostar coach park, St Pancras Station. It appears that the barriers are unmanned after 11pm each night.

I initially found it difficult to contact their Operation Department but eventually was given the name of the Operations Manager. I have contacted him and await his reply. In the meantime, I have been informed that when the barriers are down and the lights are red, you must ring the appropriate number affixed to the barrier and you will be connected to the security office who will in turn arrange for a security guard to raise the exit barrier.

I can understand that this takes considerable amounts of time, increasing the meter fares and causing embarrassment with the client travelling in the back of taxi. I believe Eurostar are already aware of this situation and I would hope they will take time out to monitor and furthermore reach a worthwhile solution. I will of course keep you updated.

*All that remains is for me to wish you and your loved ones a very Happy Christmas. Be very Lucky!*

**Former Dial-a-Cab driver, Bob Woodford, writes a regular column for Call Sign from his home in Languedoc, France and his taxi somewhere in London...**

## CALL SIGN EN LA BELLE FRANCE



Personally I think there is double-danger here: If we increase the tariff for the duration of the Games, we will get a hiding in the media as well as from our ordinary 'bread and butter' punters, one of whom has already called a mate of mine an 'opportunistic bastard'.

If we don't bother to work, we shall be handing over the streets to private hire. There is *previous* by the way - when the entire cab trade came out on strike in 1853. The police broke the strike by allowing unlicensed vehicles to ply for hire. It couldn't possibly happen again... could it? Could it?

My opinion, for what it's worth is to put a shift in - having the Games is a once in a lifetime opportunity for London and we should really be there and available. Forget all the nonsense of complaining about not being allowed to use the Olympic Route Network, it ain't gonna happen, it never has. Whichever City hosts the Games has to allow a free run for the 'Olympic family'.

And that is my lot on the Games!

**Joyeux Noel**

**Bob Woodford (Ex-P49)**

**Saint Genies de Fontedit, Languedoc, France**

### The Olympics and the taxi trade...

This uproar generated by the *Daily Mail* recently regarding the LTDA's appeal for Rate 3 fares during the Olympics, is certainly getting tongues wagging!

On the one hand we have the disadvantage that other businesses do not have, whereby our incomes are strictly limited by Parliament. Furthermore - unintentionally or not - particularly in 1973 with VAT and the compulsory fitting of a wheelchair access facility in 1989, it has added to the very high additional costs on our trade before any tax can be reclaimed back. As individuals, we run private enterprises - but under statutory control!

Although the Government did allow an 11% increase in fares in 1989 to compensate for the additional cost, it was only 4% above the increase applied for and inflation soon eroded that increase and the taxi trade never really caught up.

Oh yes, we've had the introduction of Rates 2 and 3 to persuade us to get out more, but that usually involves a combination of more drunks available, coupled with unnecessary route and / or fare disputes!

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Views on life as seen through the eyes of David Kupker (Y74) at...

# Kupkake's Korner



## Protection???

There's protection for the Cornish Pasty,  
'Cos you cannot use the name,  
But not for the London Taxi...  
The rules just ain't the same!

The French protect their Champagne,  
Their Vin Blanc and Bordeaux,  
The Italians their Salami...  
Yet the London Taxi is a no-no!

Just open *Yellow Pages*,  
For Taxi or Taxicab,  
Scan that page for ages...  
It's all just minicab ads!

The law says it's unlawful,  
TfL says it too,  
This abuse it terms is awful...  
It affects me and you!

It's time to save our Taxi,  
In name if not in deed,  
The icon of our City...  
Dies... a victim of *their* greed!

Both the papers and the media,  
cannot differentiate,  
between a 'pirate' and a Taxi...  
"They're all the same thing mate!"

A Taxi is a *Taxi*,  
It ain't no minicab,  
Protect your London Taxi...  
With all the strength you have!

We must start an "e" petition,  
To preserve the TAXI name,  
Underline our position...  
Put the rest to shame!

Ban false imitation,  
Separate us from the rest,  
Ensure there's limitation...  
Let's have a *legal* test.

**Copyright Kupkake 2011**

## Hydrogen cabs ready to go?

*Call Sign* has been told that 15 zero emission hydrogen TX4 taxis are ready to take to London's streets, coinciding with the UK's first network of hydrogen fuelling stations as they prepare to open.

The cabs, along with five hydrogen-powered Suzuki Bergmann scooters, form part of the *Hydrogen Transport for European Cities* (HyTEC) scheme.

London Mayor, **Boris Johnson** told us: "I want London to become a zero-emission city in order to deliver cleaner air and improve quality of life. It is important that this city champions innovative new technologies to get us to this point, which is why I am delighted that we are set to get even more hydrogen vehicles onto our streets in time for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond. This supports my drive to promote the uptake of cleaner vehicles such as electric cars and the new fleet of hydrogen buses running in London, which already set industry standards."

Part-funded by the *Fuel Cells & Hydrogen Joint Undertaking* (FCHJU), this latest project will also see the installation of an air products hydrogen fuelling station in London. This will connect London's two existing fuelling stations that support its hydrogen bus fleet. It is hoped that the project will show how hydrogen fuel can benefit London's zero emission ambition.

**Diana Raine**, the HyTEC European business manager added: "This new project shows London is leading the way in establishing hydrogen transport infrastructure compared to other environmental world cities. Creating a network of hydrogen fuelling stations will make it possible for fleets of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles to run in the capital, cutting carbon emissions and air pollution."

The vehicles and refuelling site forms part of London Mayor Boris Johnson's aim to promote zero and low emission technologies in the capital and tackle air pollution. It is anticipated the new project will help London to develop a vital infrastructure network of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, with many in time for the 2012 London Olympic Games.



## St George cab flag



Elsewhere in this issue of *Call Sign* you will see an ad for **Saint George flagnets**. These magnetic flags will stick nicely onto the back of your cab for times when you want to show your support of England – the Euro football championships, test matches, Wimbledon or any event where England has a team. Even perhaps for the English athletes in the UK Olympics team! Whatever the event, a flagnet will show who you support. And if at any time, there's nothing happening, then you can just take it off and store

it until the next time you need it!

They cost £3.50 for a twin pack (including postage and packing) and for every pack sold, 50p will be donated to the WCHCD to help them on next year's children's trip to the Disneyland Resort in Paris.

**Email your order to [knowler.2007@btinternet.com](mailto:knowler.2007@btinternet.com). Payment is via a secure Paypal account.**

## Boris reverses outsourcing plans!



London Mayor **Boris Johnson** has had a last minute change of mind on plans to transfer staff from TfL's Victoria Street headquarters up to Coventry. The SW1 staff involved are those that licence and check London's taxi and private hire vehicles.

The decision came late on Tuesday 22 November – the day before a planned demo outside the offices at Windsor House Victoria Street by those staff facing redundancy - represented by the Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) and supported by taxi drivers in the RMT Union.

Around 100 TfL staff were facing the sack if they didn't agree to transfer to a private company in Coventry with the official reason being to save money. Boris's decision now means the jobs are safe.

TSSA leader **Manuel Cortes** told a *Call Sign* reporter: "This is very good news for all our members at TfL who were facing the real prospect of losing their jobs if they refused to move to the Midlands. London's black cabs are famous throughout the world for the service and security they provide. Staff based in Coventry would never have been able to provide a better service."

A spokesperson at *Palestra*, home to TfL's taxi and private car hire directorate, confirmed the plan to privatise the service had been withdrawn and added that a new plan would be proposed in the New Year with the emphasis being on how the service could be delivered in house...

Another batch of views from Tom that do not necessarily reflect the views of DaC...

# THE WORLD ACCORDING TO TOM WHITBREAD

## 'Court' by the goolies!

At the end of August this year I received a large buff coloured envelope in the post. These annoy me as they are either bills, junk mail, Inland Revenue or contain some other way of ruining my day! Opening the envelope, I was transfixed by the statement in big bold letters: JURY SUMMONS. I have always been excused in the past due to my previous occupations, so it did not worry me. But after phoning the jury service office, I was told some fool had changed the law back in 2005 and now I had to attend! The location was Wood Green Crown Court on October 10 for a period of two weeks or 10 working days. About the middle of September, I received a phone call from a lady telling me she had changed the location of my jury service to Snaresbrook Crown Court. I explained that at my age it would hard for me to find that court, so it would be much better to leave me at the previously agreed court. I knew I could get to Wood Green Court in 20 minutes from home via public transport.

So on the day, I arrived at 9am suited and booted. As I approached, the security officers said 'This way Sir' and I thought what polite employees these people were. But the welcome was not extended to all the people that were negotiating the metal detector arch. It wasn't until the next day I found out they thought I was one of the barristers! I followed the directions and ended up in the canteen with some 100 other jurors, as they have 10 working courts in the building.

For some 60 minutes I sat in the canteen watching a video thanking me for volunteering for jury service; that could not have been further from the truth! Me volunteering? I think not! A tannoy message filled the canteen asking for people to volunteer for a long case and out of the large number of prospective jurors, they got 4 volunteers. I was hiding under the table at the time.

The next message was for the following names to come forward and follow an usher to a court so that a Judge could address them. I, who had never even won a raffle, was one of the named persons! There were some 24 people in the group who listened to the Judge. He said if we had a hardship that would bar us from sitting on this long case, then to let it be known on the form provided. Those selected should have a good comprehension of the English language both in reading and speaking. It was then I should have stuck my thumbs in my ears and waggled my fingers like a person akin to an inmate of Bedlam. But no, the first person this friendly Judge selected was Thomas Whitbread! After selecting another eight, he hit us saying the case could last 8 weeks. He then let us go home - I think to let us get over the shock but to return at 10am.

As a juror, you are not allowed to publish or discuss the essence of the case, but I can inform you that on the next day we were presented with two large arch lever files jammed packed with sheets of evidence, with another to follow and during the following weeks these would be gone over repeatedly.

At the end of the second week, I didn't feel too good as I travelled home on the underground, but didn't really think much of it - big mistake! During the Friday evening and night, I had an ever-increasing pain just above the left hipbone in my back. Through the daylight hours of Saturday this developed into a serious ache, which every so often had the feeling of a ragged dagger being thrust into the above stated area. Sleep was furthest from my mind as I lay in bed on Saturday night, wondering why the pain



killing tablets I had taken had little or no effect on relieving the now unbearable pain.

I continued taking them through Sunday, hoping the pain would soon subside and I could return to a normal existence. I am not the type of person who will call out an emergency doctor unless it is a last resort or when I think that I know the cause of my pain.

My wife had cooked a beautiful Sunday roast with all the trimmings, but I could only digest a couple of crisp roast potatoes and this was all I'd eaten since mid-afternoon on Saturday. By 4.30pm Sunday I'd had enough of the pain, which I was sure emanated from a piece of gravel or kidney stone trying to pass through my body. So it was then I called the emergency doctor.

I spoke to a lady who tried to put me off seeing the doc, but my insistence informed me that a GP locum was based at Homerton Hospital until 6pm, so I got myself down there and was examined by a doctor who reminded me of a young Desmond Tutu. He gave me a tiny bottle for a urine sample, although I always dread that unless they also give you a pair of rubber gloves. After all, what do they expect you to do once the tiny bottle is filled? The doctor tested the contents of the bottle with a diagnostic colour changing plastic strip. I asked him to look to see if I was pregnant. The look of shock on his face was a delight to view, but he agreed with my self-diagnosis and thought I had a kidney stone. He asked me to wait and see a consultant on the surgical team. It was now 6.15pm and the pain was increasing. I couldn't sit in any comfortable position in the waiting room, so I spent the next 3 hours walking round the hospital car park.

## Hungry, in pain and a grumpy judge... otherwise life's great!

At 9.05pm I was called into casualty and examined by a surgical SHO who also agreed with the diagnosis. He said I needed a CT scan, which if I'd been there before 9pm I could have had that night. I informed him in no uncertain terms that I had been there for the last 3 hours, which didn't seem to bother him. But he said I would need to be admitted and that didn't please me! I asked if I could go home but the doc explained that if I did that and the stone blocked the path, it was in fluid and could back up and even kill me! So with my wife giving me serious GBH of the ear, I stayed. To humiliate me further, they put me in a wheelchair to be taken to the ward.

Once there, I was introduced to my night nurse - a very nice African lady; my first request was for some type of medication to quell the pain. The request was made at 9.30pm; I

received the pills and *oramorph* - which is liquid morphine - at midnight. This took effect rapidly and lasted until 3.30am when the pain returned. I spent the rest of the night walking around the ward trying to get some relief. At 7am I asked if there was any chance of food as I had not eaten since Saturday afternoon except for the two half potatoes on Sunday. I had to see a consultant and have a CT scan first. The scan was completed within the next 2 hours, but still no food. Luckily my day nurse, another nice African nurse, kept me supplied with cups of tea. While sitting around and waiting, I used the time to inform the County Court of my incapacity to fill my jury duties as I was in hospital. They asked how long I would be unable to attend and I replied a couple of days at least.

The consultant prescribed a tablet that was hopefully going to enlarge the tube that the stone was trying to pass through and also allowed me to continue with the pain relief. But no food till 4pm. When I saw it, I was shocked. It looked as though it had been reheated in a microwave about four times with the butter sauce in which the cod was laying burnt dark brown. At least the pain eased a little during the evening, but all I wanted to do was have a good night's sleep. But even in a hospital, this was not about to happen as a patient in the next bed with a broken leg, decided to have a series of nightmares and by the time we were halfway through the night, I was almost ready to break his other one!

By the time the consultant did her rounds at 8am, I was climbing up the wall both with temper and hunger, all I wanted was to get out of hospital and go home. The consultant enquired about the pain, which was now a mild ache. She asked if I thought that I had passed the stone? This got me thinking of the old pin ball machines at Southend where you released a ball and watched it shoot around the machine into a high scoring hole. I had visions of me having a Jimmy Riddle with the stone shooting out and ringing its noisy way around the porcelain bowl! As the pain had almost gone, she said I could go home. So I was out of bed and got dressed for departure.

But my happiness was short lived when the doctor said I would have to wait for a letter and some tablets. I asked for a prescription which I could get dispensed elsewhere, but this was not to be as regulations stated I had to wait until the hospital pharmacy brought the tablets up to me. The time was 9am and patients were waiting for hospital beds, but they could not have mine until I was fully checked out and that didn't happen until I received the tablets - at 5pm! A wasted 8 hours in which another patient could have been treated. The hospital treatment was expertly administered, but the system was crap and you could see the total waste of resources.

My second shock of the day was when I found out that our friendly Judge had suspended the trial for two days until my return, so I knew where I would be the next day. As I write this, we have reached our sixth week of a very long and tiring case and I am thinking of asking the Judge if he knows the telephone number of *Dignitas* in Switzerland! Hopefully by the time you read this article the case would have finished and I will have my life back again.

*May I take this time to wish you and all your family a very Happy Christmas with a healthy and prosperous New Year...*

**Tom Whitbread**  
DaC Board Member





**Howard knows all about DaC and RTAs through his career as a driver and garage proprietor**

**Howard Kott (B74)** of **Justcabs** (formerly **LP Motors**) is happy to inform **Dial-a-Cab** members that a late TX4 fitted with DaC radio

## DaC taxi available for RTA repairs at Justcabs...

equipment is available for the exclusive use of DaC drivers following road traffic accidents. Howard told **Call Sign** that where members use Justcabs excellent non-fault scheme, if the claim is accepted then the cost of the vehicle rental will be recovered from the third party insurer.

For non-fault accidents Justcabs use **Sovereign Auto** in conjunction with **Glaisyers** solicitors, who have many years' experience in the non-fault industry.

In all cases Howard is able to provide you with advice on the best way to deal with your RTA, gained through his many years experi-

ence in running one of London's largest fleets and of course his many years as a DaC driver – during which period he won **Taxi Driver of the Year** on no less than three occasions!

Howard also told **Call Sign** that if the DaC taxi is available, he would be prepared to rent it out at a daily rate of £45 or a weekly rate of £245.

**Justcabs are located at 103-107 Dunbridge Street, Bethnal Green, London E2 6JG. Tel 020 7739 0210. Fax 020 7739 7725. Email info@justcabs.org.uk.**

*A DaC taxi is also available from Chief Taxis, Cab Aid and Cricklewood Carriers...*

## Lee on the move again....

Dial-a-Cab driver **Lee Pearce (J71)** thought his soccer playing career had taken a turn for the better when following a serious knee injury, former **Chelsea** and **Southampton** star **Neil Shipperley** had taken him from Chertsey Town to Walton Casuals where Neil was the manager. Lee started the season at Chertsey Town FC!

He began well, but then in his second match everything went wrong and Walton were trounced 5 – 1 by high-flying Bognor Regis Town. Neil Shipperley resigned and Chairman – former **West Ham** star – **Tony Gale** announced his replacement as **Mick Sullivan** who'd had successful spells at Merstham in addition to taking Leatherhead into the Ryman Premier league and winning both the Ryman League and Surrey Senior Cups.

Lee told **Call Sign** that Mick had pulled him aside and told him how well he had played – and then dropped him from the team! Lee put in a transfer request and was soon snapped up on a temporary contract by fellow Ryman league side, **Godalming Town**. He went straight into the first team for the away game at league leaders Maidstone United and although Godalming lost 4–2, Lee made several good saves and the team played some of their best football of the season.

**"This has been one hell of a season for me so far,"** Lee added, **"but I'm hoping that Godalming will be the last stop – at least for this season!"**

Lee got his wish when on November 17, Godalming manager **John Underwood** signed him on a permanent transfer and on his first 'official' game his new team won 4-1, with Lee making 4 good stops and only being finally beaten by a Whitstable penalty. His new manager was so pleased with Lee that he gave him the following Tuesday off to celebrate his 34th birthday...!



**Lee with his main form of earning a living!**

## The World's Biggest Pothole???



**Dial-a-Cab** drivers often have messages put out via their terminals warning fellow drivers about new potholes that have suddenly appeared on a main road somewhere. However, **Call Sign Online** reader in Singapore, **Jenny Tan**, who works for **SMRT Taxis**, sent us this photo that she claims is probably the world's biggest pothole. She may be right – unless you know differently!



From 1 January 2012, a rolling age limit for taxis will be introduced that will see cabs forcibly retired at 15 years old. And from 1 April the same year, all new or new to licensing for London taxis must, as a minimum, meet Euro 5 standards for emissions. This is all part of the Mayor's Air Quality Strategy (MAQS).

However, recently published on the LTPH website was further information that could be of interest to the more mature driver who wants to continue working beyond retirement age, or to enjoy a few extra years of life with their existing vehicle.

TfL/LTPH say that following a review of responses from the consultation document, taxis that undergo conversion to an alternative fuel could be granted a further five years licensing life, thereby extending the maximum age limit to 20 years - subject to certain criteria.

The choice of alternative fuels acceptable for conversion are Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Biomethane. All conversions to vehicles must be approved by TfL before conversion and completed before the 15 year maximum age limit is reached.

With these exemptions in mind, **Call Sign** conducted a survey among **Dial-a-Cab** drivers with older cabs to see if they would be likely to take up the offer and extend the life of their taxi by up to five years - if they could get their cab converted for £5000 or less...



**Lawrence Short (E68)** runs an 'X' Reg TX1 and told us he would not be converting to an alternative fuel supply, nor is he interested in extending the life of his present taxi.

"This cab is getting on a bit now so I will run it for the next two or three years and then look around for a decent, maybe two year old replacement."



**Robert Roney (C14)** said that his TX1 was fitted with a turbo conversion about 4 years ago at a cost of £2350 because it seemed to be the

**With LTPH / TfL offering an extension to 15 year old cabs, we ask if you will:**

## CONVERT TO GAS FOR AN EXTRA 5 YEARS???

best option at the time and while it had been reliable, he was not really happy with it and was therefore not interested in any further conversion.

"I will consider my brand options nearer the time re changing cabs," he said.



**Bernard Swain (R37)**, a sprightly 67 year old said that if he were younger, the £1000 per year cost to extend the cab's life would be a good idea.

"I am going to keep this 04 Reg TX2 cab for as long as I can, so I am not interested in any conversion at my age but I think it is a good idea for some younger drivers. However, it is almost a restriction of trade telling me that my cab is good to carry 5 passengers one year, but not good enough a year later at an arbitrary date."



**Mike Bures (B1)** loves his 'X' Reg TTT Metro and at 6' 6" tall, can squeeze into it with ease.

"Yes, I would definitely convert to an alternative fuel if it extended the life of this cab. I'm 60 years old and look forward to many more years working and as yet I have no intention to retire voluntarily any time soon, so I would definitely consider the options available. This engine has done 270,000 miles and is still going strong, so I will make a decision nearer the time based on reliability and efficiency."

**Ian Morgan (M68)** runs a 'V' Reg TX1 that is currently fitted with an exhaust conversion of



unknown make.

"At 62, I am happy to continue working beyond 65 so I would definitely take up the conversion offer as my cab has only three years to go before it 'officially' comes off the road. So yes, in principle I would be interested to extend its life, but I wonder about alternative fuel availability. That would be a major factor in my decision making process."



Finally **Call Sign** spoke to the youngest member of our survey, 43 year old **Daniel Andrews (O92)** who's '03' TX2 has just had a major engine overhaul costing 'mega bucks'.

"Yes, I would be very interested indeed," Daniel said as he reached for his pocket calculator to estimate the fuel savings based on an annual figure of 30,000 miles.

"There are many other considerations to take into account as well of course. I live in Kent, so availability of the alternative fuel supply would be important and I would need to know if there was a local specialist conversion company, if they would provide a free taxi while mine was been worked on, how long the work would take, finance arrangements and very importantly, tax relief on the cost of the conversion. I would also want to know the long-term effects and implications if any, on engine wear and performance too."



## THREE NEW DAC FREEMAN OF THE CITY OF LONDON

Three **Dial-a-Cab** drivers have become *Freemen of The City of London* at the same time. **Doug Fisher (A59)**, **Dennis Heavin (A01)** and **Steve Tyson (V99)** took the next step on the Livery ladder recently at the Chamberlain's Court at Guildhall after partaking of a celebratory lunch at the Butcher's Hall. This issue's front cover shows Murray Craig, Clerk to the Chamberlain (right) and the Beadle on the left with the three DaC drivers at the presentation ceremony.

You join the *Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers* as a Freeman with the next step becoming a Freeman of the City of London. You can then apply to be a Liveryman of the Company and possibly become a Court Assistant, a Warden and ultimately Master – like last year's Master, **Jim Rainbird (T25)** – who is pictured with the three drivers. You never know, we could be looking at three future Masters!



The three new Freeman: L-R Doug Fisher, Dennis Heavin and Steve Tyson with last year's Master Jim Rainbird



### Christmas stocking fillers...

As Xmas is almost upon us (already!), I thought I'd take a look at a few of the top Christmas presents available this year and give you my review on those I have tried out and consider worth buying.

Do your children enjoy playing the hugely popular **Angry Birds** game on iPhone/Android? If so, a great gift all the family can enjoy is the all-new **Angry Birds Knock on Wood** board game. Essentially, the game is a real-world recreation of the mobile game and is loads of fun for all ages. It's about £20 on *Amazon*. I've bought one for my family and can't wait to play it with them.

If you have teenage boys, you've likely already bought them either **Battlefield 3** (BF3) or its rival **Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3** (MW3). I've tried both on PC and here's my advice: if you haven't bought one yet but will be for Christmas, forget MW3. It's just more of the same *Call of Duty*. BF3 on the other hand is in my opinion (and many others too), the greatest multiplayer game ever made. Whilst the single player campaign is lacking, the multiplayer is so rich and expansive. Jaw-dropping visuals, incredible attention to detail and immersive gameplay come as standard. In MW3, players can be selfish and simply go on killing sprees. By contrast, BF3 rewards team work (helping squad mates achieve objectives, healing squad mates, etc). Missing from MW3 but available in

# GAMING

*What's worth playing?*



BF3 are vehicles: tanks, APCs, jets, helicopters and jeeps. Learning to control these add so much extra depth to the game that there are literally months of gameplay value in *Battlefield 3*. If you're still in doubt, try this: Go to your local second hand game shop and count how many pre-owned or unwanted gift copies of MW3 are available. Then count how many BF3 copies are available. I did this at the weekend at CeX: 27 MW3 to 1 BF3. That's evidence in itself of the replay value of *Battlefield 3*. One word of warning though – if you aim to buy BF3 for PC, be sure the intended PC meets the minimum requirements.

If you have children at college or university, then **Livescribe Echo Smartpen** could prove useful in their lectures. This gadget records everything the user hears or writes, providing quick and accurate access to their notes, as well as the ability to upload saved audio and notes to their PC or Mac. It's available at *Amazon* for £155 (RRP £179).

And finally, the big one – **iPhone 4S**. Having tried this out in the *Apple* store, initially I wasn't that impressed. It seemed no different to iPhone 4. And then I discovered *Siri*. On the new iPhone 4S, simply hold the home button and up pops *Siri*, an artificial intelligence app which uses voice recognition to allow you to interact with your iPhone like never before. Dictate text messages or email.

Launch apps or phone a contact via voice control. Ask *Siri* any question you like, (ie which minicab firm is trying to take over London – okay, maybe that's too obscure for *Siri*!) or the population of China and it will go off and find the information for you. *Siri* on the iPhone 4 is incredible. But starting at £499, it is also very expensive!

Anyway, I hope my musings has proved useful to some of you, and I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jon Winterburn  
DaC Network Administrator

## SAVINGS!

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Well, with the lights twinkling away on Oxford and Regent Streets, it must be Christmas time again and with the economy apparently slowing, it's nice to see the start of the Christmas period beginning at a more sensible time. Just a few years back, when getting a fast buck was easy, it began in October! Now times are harder so Christmas time on Oxford Street starts a little later. You'd have thought it would be the opposite, but I suppose people are motivated by things being easy and put off by anything perceived as hard!

## Zonal v GPS

Next year I will have held a green badge for 20 years and for almost all that time I have been on the radio. Before joining **Dial-a-Cab** I was on ComCab, but was very pleased to switch over to the *Gentleman's Circuit* and have not looked back. DaC is a much better company to work for. The staff are very helpful and it's run by drivers for drivers. If I had one criticism, it would be our zonal booking-in system compared to the GPS systems used by other circuits. In these modern times, I find continually having to book into zones a bit old fashioned, if not tiresome and hard work. The job is stressful enough without having to remember to keep changing zones and when times are hard - even a bit demoralising - it seems you have to get work out of the system, whereas on GPS the work comes to you.

If you read the **Pat Keefe (G01)** letter in November's *Call Sign*, I agree with many of his points. Indeed, the tempting nature of the DaC booking-in system causes most of the problems, which in turn is compounded by the broadcast screens that show unmatched jobs. Under GPS, the numbers of drivers getting a letter from the Compliance Officer would decrease because the temptation is removed and a driver would be offered a rank to book into only when the GPS system sees that the driver is physically nearby.

If you work mornings, you can sit in a zone and watch work being dispatched all around you while you get none. If you are number 1 in a zone, you can't jump zones because you will lose your place and if you are not in a primary back-up zone, you won't be offered anything. Yes, it is annoying when you have been sitting in SW19 for half an hour and there is an unmatched job in SW20 that is dispatched into S50C to a driver who is just starting work (SW20 is offered to S50C before SW19). Or a driver books into SW18 from SW10 and gets the job simply because he is faster on the screen than you. Or you are in SW6 and there is work in W6 maybe 3 streets away. Or if a driver is number 1 in Harlow (E99) and gets offered a job in Grays, what about the driver going past on the A13 who happened

Former fireman Richard Potter and life behind the

# POTTER'S WHEEL



to book in a couple of minutes later? Or the driver who is in Warlingham (S50E) who will not get offered a job in West Wickham SE51 some 4 miles away, simply because S50E is not a back-up zone for SE51?

Personally, I think the work would be distributed more fairly and evenly to all members under GPS, would enhance the driving experience with DaC and greatly reduce stress levels. I appreciate that a major computer rewrite would be expensive, but the benefits would be well worthwhile and it would pay for itself in the long run by DaC having to fund fewer complaint committee meetings.

## Heathrow breakdown!

A rare occurrence happened recently when I broke down in the car park at Heathrow's Terminal 5 and it was the battery. There can be nothing worse than just getting a job at Heathrow, meeting the passenger, going to the car park and the taxi won't start! What was alarming is

that I got a jump-start from a PH driver but the cab wouldn't take it and I had no warning at all. Just like that.

The AA came along quickly, but it took even longer to get out of the car park on the grounds that the Parking Assistants in their office wanted to make me pay the whole amount on the ticket. There was a long queue at the pay station by the lifts, so I was going to pay on the way out. I explained what had happened, but they said I should have let them know straight away. After phoning around for new battery prices, *KPM* and *JVBright* quoted £205 (inc vat). Not happy with this, I went down to *Halfords* and brought a Bosch HSB 019 for £129 with a 5-year warranty. A TX4 is not listed in their books, but it's the same battery as a Porsche Cayenne. Funny how the same battery costs nearly £70 more just because it's for a taxi.

## Call Centre thank you...

On a personal note, I just wanted to say thank you to all the call centre staff that keep drivers up to date with traffic info, fixes and queries etc via the terminals. It really is a big help when you are on the road so thanks as well to those drivers who take the time to pass messages onto the call centre. All info helps us during long shifts.

**Finally, wherever you are and wherever you spend it, I wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas.**

**Richard Potter (T51)**

## Dial-a-Cab Credit Union

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### Will Justine Greening reverse Philip Hammond's decision to close the M4 bus and taxi Lane?

Introduced by **Nicholas Parsons**, *Just a Minute* is a panel game in which the contestants are challenged to speak for 60 seconds without hesitation, deviation or repetition on any subject that comes up on the cards. With panellists such as Kenneth Williams, Clement Freud and Derek Nimmo, it became one of the

With deference to a British institution, Radio 4's wonderful panel game...

## JUST A MINUTE!

nation's favourite programmes and next year, the program will move to BBC2 with a new panel to celebrate its 45th anniversary.

But the heading *Just a Minute* can now also be applied to what was the M4 bus and taxi lane. It had been described by former Transport Secretary **Philip Hammond** as being *symbolic of Labour's war on the motorist* and also as *a piece of folly*. He suspended it last December until the 2012 Olympics in July, when it will become part of the *Olympic Route Network*. He said it would be scrapped permanently after the Games ended. The cost of removing it was put at £410,000 with the cost for the 2012 brief Olympic reintroduction needing to be added to that.

Mr Hammond has now departed to the position of Defence Secretary and has been replaced by Putney MP **Justine Greening** and

hopefully a new look at the former bus lane will lead Ms Greening to revert to the *status quo* after the Games, instead of abandoning it.

The new position came in response to a written parliamentary question when interim figures on time saved by other motorists who now use the M4's third lane were requested.

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Mike Penning**, gave the **astonishing answer that since the bus and taxi lane's closure, journey time savings for cars were "in the order of 60 seconds."** The figure was calculated by the **Highways Agency** who compared journeys captured on camera between January and June 2011 with those over the same period last year.

The Highways Agency is now reviewing the impact of the bus lane's closure and will publish its findings next year.



## Addison Lee acquires Lewis Day!

Both the taxi and private hire worlds gasped when on 14th November, Addison Lee entered into an agreement to acquire the passenger car operations of Lewis Day, while CitySprint took the LD courier side.

At the time of writing, **Call Sign** believes that Lewis Day – whose turnover last year was around £36million – will be concentrating on the medical side of their business, something many consider strange after the problems of early last year when the company were accused of charging the NHS for trips they had not actually made.

The deal also now gives CitySprint some 2,000 couriers with around 15,000 transactions per day. It also makes Addison Lee the largest PH company, probably bigger than any radio taxi company (see *Editorial on page 3*).

## Taxis that are built to last!

Both the *London Taxi Company* and *Mercedes Benz* produce taxis that are pretty tough and in the case of the majority of accidents, there may be damage to the cab but the chances are that the driver will be protected from injuries caused by the other vehicle. However, compared to the latest taxis seen on London's roads, both are made of paper!

Late October saw London commuters given another form of taxi to choose from – armoured tanks! These army vehicles, known as Tanksis with their bright yellow illuminated signs, invaded our taxi ranks and faced the capital's rush hour by dwarfing our cabs and picking up our passengers! In reality, the 16 Tanksis picked up just a handful of lucky passengers who paid no fares in the two days they prowled the capital's streets passing all the usual tourist spots – even Buckingham Palace. The question is why were they there? Was AL planning an invasion?

Nope! It was all in aid of publicising the new blockbuster video game, *Battlefield 3*. While the game is just being released in the UK, since its release EA has shipped a massive ten million copies, which is about one million shy of predecessor *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*'s total sales since March 2010.

And is *Battlefield 3* any good? Jon Winterburn gives his view on page 25. The few drivers **Call Sign** has spoken to that either have the game or whose kids have it, all say that its graphics and amazing sound effects are nothing short of sensational. But none of the drivers wanted to swap their cab for a Tanksis! They have now been withdrawn from use following LTPH demand that they appear at SGS for an overhaul!

*Battlefield 3* was released on 28th October and is available on *PlayStation 3*, *Xbox 360* and *PC*.



Anyone want a cab???

**Bagwhat Singh**  
Call Sign Online



"I felt I wanted to do *something* to help, but didn't know quite what," **Jon Trevor (W94)** told *Call Sign* referring to his friend and former DaC subscriber 'Yorkshire' **Jeff Foster**, who had been off work for an extended period of time after having had a kidney removed due to cancer.

"Like me, in his younger days Jeff was very sporty," Jon continued. "He was a former **Saracens** rugby player and I was a professional boxer. I mentioned the dilemma to my wife Rachel and she came up with the idea of a sport-related fund-raising effort in honour of Jeff. So, looking back over my boxing training diaries from 25+ years ago when I was achieving 500 sit-ups and 500 press-ups at least four times a week, I - or should I say Rachel - decided that such an achievement nowadays, when I'm down to about 100 of each 3 times a week and 25 years on, would be a suitable target to aim for and hopefully a fund-raiser to grab peoples' support, raising as much money as possible for Jeff. So yes, I can blame her I guess! But I've been training up a while, so I'm determined to succeed!"

Then Jon got ready to begin what many considered to be almost an impossibility for someone who hasn't reached such targets for so many years, even though he still competes in the occasional triathlon!

The venue for the occasion was none other than the **Grosvenor Gardens taxi shelter**, itself an integral part of **Dial-a-Cab's** history as it was here in 1952 and in the back of his cab that founder Chairman, **Bonnie Martyn** got together with four other drivers and spoke of forming a telephone / radio taxi service where the public could phone instead of hailing a cab in the street. From that meeting of minds and vision, the *Owner Drivers Radio Taxi Service* was born.

So, under the shadow of the shelter and aided by fellow DaCman **Chris Hanrahan (B47)** who acted as referee and physio, Jon began his warming-up routine.

"Chris has offered to be my impartial observer and official counter, because I don't want anyone to think I have cheated," Jon said while still able to smile! But that smile would soon vanish as the enormity of his task ahead slowly dawned on him. Jon went to his mark.

With grunts, the occasional groan and plenty of sweat and utter, focussed determination, Jon battled his way through the first 300. The next 200 were looking tougher but Jon ploughed through them. Then it suddenly dawned on those watching that he still had another 500 to go! He was sweating profusely and looking tired. His rhythm was slowing. As he reached 800, he looked as though he was in a state of hypnosis. Then it was 900 and there was even the thought of forcibly stopping Jon completing the task because he was looking almost ill. Then it was 950 and every push or sit up - he was mixing the two to avoid boredom - became a major operation. Then there were just 10 to go. Chris tried counting down towards one to encourage Jon, but he

**As former DaC driver Jeff Foster recovers from a cancer operation where his kidney was removed, Call Sign witnesses an amazing achievement...**

## Jon and the big press up!



Jon warms up for his marathon push-up effort



Call Sign's Alan Green raises Jon's hand in victory

looked as though he was going to fail right at the last knockings, each movement causing him extreme pain (*see cover pic*). But his years of triathlon meant that pain was something he had learned to ignore. Three, two and then just one and the 1000 exercises were completed, thanks to Jon's sheer resolute attitude to complete the task for his friend Jeff. He collapsed onto the hard ground as a huge cheer went up from all those present. He managed to get up and held his arm aloft - probably painful in itself!

Having caught his breath a little, Jon told *Call Sign* how Jeff Foster had always spoken so highly of the medical team and staff at Guys Hospital and the care he had received. While being very grateful for any funds Jon had raised in sponsorship, Jeff also hoped that Jon's amazing achievement

would raise public awareness of the condition he and many others were suffering and that would make the day so very worthwhile.

Jon also wanted to publicly thank and express his gratitude to members of the **London Ex-Boxers Association**, his cabbing colleagues, *Call Sign* and the many other supporters - too many to name - who have donated to the cause.

**Anyone who would like to contribute, simply leave an envelope marked Jon Trevor W94 in Drivers Reception or send it to Call Sign, 39/47 East Road N1 6AH and mark the envelope Jeff Foster appeal.**

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"I was amazed and so were KPM," **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Laury Bartlett (L84)** told **Call Sign** as he waited patiently for his new MB Vito to be fitted with his DaC data terminal at the Roman Way depot.

"Apparently," he continued, "my insurance cover note, which has a box printed on it to tick specifically detailing its use as a taxi for public hire, was good enough for the DVLA to issue a road fund tax disc but not good enough for SGS to pass the cab first time around and therefore grant me licence plates to operate it as a taxi!"

Continuing his story, Laury said: "I was actually on my way - some may say excitedly after some disappointing experiences with my previous cab - to collect my new purchase, when KPM called to say the cab had failed on a documentary technicality and would not be ready until the following day. They were extremely apologetic, not to mention gutted, but that's life I guess!"

Apparently, what SGS required was that

## THE MAGIC RUBBER STAMP!



Laury's cab failed because it wasn't officially a taxi!

the insurance cover note had the following inscription clearly written on it even though the insurance cover note already clearly stated that it was for public hire on a taxi:

*'It is further certified that the policy to which this Certificate relates complies with the requirements of the London Cab Order of 1934'.*

KPM then promptly added the necessary wording via a rubber stamp onto the cover note, the cab was re-presented and it passed with no further problems.

Laury smiled as he ended his tale: "It shows just how careful you now have to be regarding documentation and how vigilant SGS are. Who would have thought that a tiny rubber stamp could have such importance! It must be magic!"

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## New garage offers 20% service discount

**Nigel Andrew** and former long-serving **KPM** mechanic **Alfie O'Donnell** have opened their own new garage at 2a Three Colts Lane close to Bethnal Green overground station.

As a special opening offer, **A&N Taxi Repairs** are giving a 20% discount on all servicing up until Christmas.

Nigel and Alfie have over 30 years experience in the cab trade between them and can carry out mechanical, electrical and air conditioning repairs on either LTI or Mercedes taxis. You can call them on 0207 033 6638...



Alfie and Nigel are offering a 20% discount on servicing

## Electric taxi catches fire!

Just over two years ago, **Call Sign**, published an exclusive story based on the words of **Bas Vos**, then-director of Dutch radio circuit **Taxi Centrale Amsterdam**, in which he claimed he was purchasing 50 electric TX4s. Mr Vos told us that he had visited the LTI factory in Coventry where he claimed he had ordered 50 TX4s. However, when we questioned LTI about the order, they refused to confirm or deny its existence but assured us that if it existed, the taxis would certainly not be electric.

**Call Sign** later learned that the vehicles were purchased as normal diesel taxis from the LTI / Geely Shanghai factory of which some were later converted to electric independently of LTI.

But then in early November this year, the first major shock when one of the converted electric TX4s burst into flames in an Amsterdam suburb. The driver and passengers escaped harm and the fire brigade were on the scene within minutes. Whilst no cause has been officially given, one fireman told **Call Sign Online** that the suspicion was of a "short circuit."

The only question is whether all Dutch electric cabs will be taken off the road until the cause has been determined.

**Ron Yarborough**  
Call Sign Online



A Fireman putting out the TX4 fire in Amsterdam



**Keith Reading**  
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"Yes, I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place and I really don't know what to do just yet," **Ricky Murphy (C32)** admitted to *Call Sign*.

"I've been cabbage for around 4 years, with two of those years on **Dial-a-Cab**. I work only a few days a week, preferring to spend time with my family rather than be a slave to the cab. I expect the cab to work for me, not the other way around," he said with a smile.

"Now I hear that my Fairway will have to come off the road this time next year, so I really will have to make a decision before then as to what to do. I bought the cab at a good price three years ago; it has been totally reliable during that time with only a battery, alternator and fan belt needing to be replaced. I have it serviced regularly and it has just passed its overhaul at the first presentation - and, it was the cheapest overhaul so far!"

Ricky continued: "So you can understand my reticence at having to replace it. I do not really want to rent a cab because that would mean working at least another day a week, nor do I wish to get on the treadmill of finance, so I am going to save as much money as I can during this last year of the cabs' life and make a final decision nearer the time when we have to part company." Ricky told us that he already recognised that his final decision will not be an easy one. At 32 years old,

# Decisions, decisions!



Ricky is one of around 5000 drivers between now and 2015 whose cabs will no longer be licensed

his cabbage life is still ahead of him, but he sincerely believes that there is life other than driving his cab. But Ricky is just one of the estimated 5000 licensed taxis that will have to come off the road between now and 2015.

"I know there are other drivers out there with a similar outlook and position to me," Ricky said before going back out to try and trap another

job, "so right now I'm putting off any decision as to what I will replace my loyal 'bus' with until much closer to the day of reckoning..."

There is a special *Call Sign* survey of other drivers in Ricky's position on page 24, where they talk of a possible gas conversion.

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*Worshipful Company of Hackney  
Carriage Drivers*

## REMEMBRANCE SERVICE AT ST PAUL'S

WCHCD Master **Eddie Crossley** joined other Masters of City Livery Companies at St Paul's on 6th November to attend the 90th annual **Livery Companies Memorial Service**. Along with the other Masters, Eddie laid a Cross in remembrance.



**Eddie in the Garden of Remembrance**

The day began with breakfast in the Crypt below St Paul's and was followed by a service in the Garden. Afterwards, the laying of wreaths in the gardens was led by Sheriff Alderman Alan Yarrow and Sheriff Wendy Mead. Alderman Yarrow made a speech.

The Service was attended by the Lord Mayor, St Paul's Clergy, VIPs and Royal British Legion personnel. This year the Clerk to the WCHCD, Mary Whitworth, accompanied the Master.

### *The Exhortation...*

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning*

*We will remember them*

*When you go home tell them of us and say -*

*For your tomorrow we gave our today*

## Preferential rates for legal services

**While helping LTFUC's underprivileged children...!**



Legal firm **Davenport Lyons**, who are based in Old Burlington Street, have been in existence for over 75 years and are accepted as one of the most successful firms of its kind. They are now offering their services to **Dial-a-Cab** drivers - and indeed the licensed taxi trade as a whole if they happen to read *Call Sign*! But this is a legal service with something of a difference. Davenport Lyons provide bespoke legal solutions service delivered by their market-leading lawyers who understand the challenges that clients - including the world's finest taxi driving fleet - face.

**But now they have come up with an idea that will provide you with the best possible**

**help in your time of legal assistance, while at the same time helping the London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children because every fee they receive from a taxi driver client will see 10% donated to the LTFUC! And those fees will be preferential rates and agreed beforehand, so there is no question of Davenport Lyons just adding that 10% to your cost. The 10% will come from the company's profit.**

### *Among the services offered are:*

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**If you need any of the above, then ask for Nick Hall on 020 7468 1623. His speciality is wills, inheritance tax planning and the above, but if you are looking for something else he'll be happy to find the right person for you**

If you have always used the same solicitors and are happy with them, that's great! But if you are looking for expert legal assistance and want to help a taxi trade charity at the same time, then contact Nick Hall on **020 7468 1623...**



Last issue's **Call Sign** ran the story of the *Mercedes* taxi that failed its' annual overhaul because of the new tyres it had just had fitted. **Dial-a-Cab** driver **Raymond Fussell (K64)** was the driver concerned and our advice in that *November* issue was to look for the rating system on the tyres. As an example, **Dunlop** have a Q rating and **Michelin** have a T – both ratings are on the outside of the tyre.

One DaC driver called to ask about **Cooper/Avon** tyres as he had used them in the past. We asked their Customer Service Manager **Ken Tucker** about a rating system for their tyres and he told us that the manufacturers of the tyre, the Cooper Tyre & Rubber Company Europe Ltd, do not produce any tyres specifically or designed as taxi tyres.

So while they may fit and provide good service, these tyres have not been passed and may well cause your Mercedes to get a stop note if fitted.

Our thanks to Mr Tucker for his honesty...

## No to Cooper Tyres...



Raymond with his fail certificate and pass one when he changed tyres

## LTFUC 'Fun Day' Draws in the tourists!

There may well have been a few clouds around - after all Sunday 30 October was the first day following the clocks 'springing' forward - but from early morning until late afternoon the *Piazza at Covent Garden* filled with some magical sunshine as the **London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children** unleashed their annual Fun Day!

As usual, both tourists and Londoners out for the day – including **Call Sign's** roving reporter / photographer, **Alan Green** – were entertained by side shows, stalls, the giant **Furry Tail Folk**, **Doug Cheshire** with his vintage taxi and **Christopher Gillott** of **Star789 Limited** who signed copies of his new children's book **Nelson 'n' Deck and Friends** and then donated his day's takings and of course the Pearlies including Queen Doreen Golding. Finally, of course, the **Covent Garden Management** without whom the day couldn't happen! And of course there was the tombola and raffle.

Fund Chair, **Sue Angel**, asked us to thank all the helpers without whom the day would never get off the ground, also the many drivers and their families who came along to have some fun whilst helping to swell the Fund's coffers towards their next project, the annual kid's party at the Grosvenor House Hotel.

All in all, yet another successful Fun Day from the LTFUC...



A young visitor is sorry he asked for directions

### Call Sign December 2011

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# Mailshot

**Either write to Call Sign at  
Dial-a-Cab House  
or email us at  
callsignmag@aol.com**

## Bike crashes and household insurance...

*Hi Al*

Re the incident **Stuart Waterman (C36)** had involving a bike crashing into and breaking his front grille (*Grilled, November Call Sign*). Around three years ago whilst stationary, a cyclist came along my nearside, lost her balance and scratched the side of my cab. Fortunately for me, she stopped and apologised and I asked if she was prepared to pay for the damage? She offered me £20 but I told her it would cost considerable more and asked if she had insurance. She replied that she only had household insurance, which she believed would cover the insurance for the bike. We exchanged addresses; she produced proof of address and said she would contact me. True to her word, she did contact me and sent me details of her insurance company. They required two estimates and said they would pay for the repair, but not for any hiring of a replacement cab or loss of earnings. I accepted their offer. Whether I would have got any more for loss of earnings going through the courts, I don't know. I was just fortunate that this young lady turned out to be honest and helpful.

We are fortunate in this trade for the fact that we can choose our working days, so I worked the weekend to make up for the cab being off the road for a couple of days and nothing was lost.

Most home insurances do cover cycles, so if involved, it's worth pursuing.

**David Freeman (A46)**

**Thanks Dave, useful info than many won't have known about ...Ed**

## Concise article on cyclists?

*Hi Alan*

I have just seen the latest copy of *Call Sign Online* (Nov 2011) and had to drop a line. What you say about the menace of cyclists is what I and most sensible drivers have been thinking for some time. A most erudite and concise article (as always). Congratulations...

**Sam Stuart (Ex-G05)**

**Now domiciled in Espagne**

**Cycling down to the beach tomorrow, Sam!! ...Ed**

## And more...

*Dear Sir*

I am not on Dial-a-Cab but was passed a copy of your excellent magazine by a friend on your circuit. Your editorial on cyclists was excellent and I congratulate you on gauging the mood of the trade against those on two wheels who are nothing short of out-right menaces.

I just wish my radio circuit produced a magazine as good as yours that gave drivers a say instead of just having board members talking about themselves.

**Tony Derek**

**Licensed taxi driver**

**Thanks Tony. It's nice to know that *Call Sign* is appreciated. You can read every issue at our library on [www.dac-callsign.co.uk](http://www.dac-callsign.co.uk) ...Ed**

## Fares increase?

At a time when there are a lot of redundancies and seeing how slow it is out there at the moment, don't you think it would do the trade a lot of good to keep the meter the way it is until things improve? Let's face it, the meter is good. The ranks are long, do you not you think that if we get a rise, the papers and the public will slate us again? Would it not help the BoM selling our service if fares were kept the same? Do you think TfL cares whether customers use us or not? We don't have the same hold over the public as the train service does, so if we make ourselves too expensive, the public will just stop using us and you'll see more and more minicabs dropping customers off at the stations. We should not give private hire even more ammunition to discredit us. I fear if we go ahead with a price increase, it will just be another nail in our coffin.

**Keith Hancock (R47)**

**Brian Rice replies: Hi Keith, TfL are talking about a 5.2% increase in April and another 22% increase whilst the Games are on. I believe there should be an increase annually, however, I also believe the above is a little high and I have told them that. I also believe the majority of members will think as we do...**

## Costs and the Olympics

*Dear Mr Chairman*

Re the proposed 22 percent fare increase for the Olympics (*Reflections of the Chairman – November Call Sign*), someone at LTPH

is insulting all our intelligences by even putting the subject out for discussion!

And while we're at it, let's think about this. We need to cut costs so let's convince the government to do away with the show-room tax on new taxis. Let's get Boris to not charge us for cab licence plates for the next 12 months. Let's cut the Board of Management down to five. Let's ask for three percent and if it all goes belly up, we can all nip round to the Chairman's place for a warm up! After all, don't you get the winter fuel allowance? Then if we are really clever and hold onto Mr T, our fifty bob tailor / cook, in the shake-up then we can all go round to his house for a bit of telly and a cooked lunch in the afternoons. He must get a free TV licence by now? Then if we can get Tom a caravan to live in at Canvey - bingo, we can all have a free weeks holiday every five years!

*PS Don't you just love me, Mr Chairman?*

**Gary Cox (046)**

**'Mr Chairman' replies: Thanks Gary, we could also have an occasional trip every few weeks out to visit your home in Broadmoor!**

## PH and licensed taxi use

*Alan*

Your last paragraph in *From the Editors Desk* (*November Call Sign*) isn't quite right. Whilst it is true that we did not seek to introduce any further restrictions on what could be licensed as a taxi and PH in the consultation, we certainly haven't changed our view with regards to vehicles that have been licensed as taxis being licensed as PH. As such, any PH operator presenting an LTC vehicle would not be licensed as PH and there are no LTC taxis, Metrocabs etc licensed as a PHV and they never will be.

I hope this clears it up.

**John Mason**

**Director LTPH**

**I'm relieved to hear that and thank you for clearing it up John. However, the consultation document does not specify that fact and gives the impression that PH will be able to use any vehicle they wish, so I would like to know what would happen if John Griffin said he wanted to licence 1000 Euro V TX4s? Surely a court would say that there is no longer a ban on PH using any vehicle resembling a taxi? And even if you are**





# Mailshot

continued from page 32

serious about PH not using our vehicles (which I'm sure you are), what about when you move on and a successor is approached on the subject? My views on what would happen if we began using a vehicle previously used as a minicab (Vito) have come to pass even quicker than I imagined ...Ed

## Converting 15-year old taxis to gas

Dear Alan

Re *The MAQS Exemptions* (November *Call Sign*) and the possibility of gaining an extra 5 years on top of the previous 15-year limit decreed by our Mayor, I was one of the 15 drivers who in 2001 took up the offer in *Call Sign* from Camden Council to convert my TX1 to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), whilst they would pick up the cost leaving me to just pay the VAT. While the offer sounded fair, the conversion was the worst day's work I have ever done.

The newly converted gas cab gave me nothing but grief, whereas my TX1 had given me very few problems. Once converted, I kept breaking down and eventually had to replace the head no less than three times as the makers (ECO, who are no longer trading) claimed it was not covered by insurance because of having used the original engine block. I was lucky that M&O agreed to take it in part exchange at the time, because its value had become totally decimated. I now have a TX4, which is totally brilliant! Gas cabs? I wouldn't touch them again with a bargepole...

**Jim Smith (D09)**

## And another...

Hi Alan

I had one of the 15 converted gas cabs organised through *Call Sign* in 2001 and it was a bit of a nightmare with the engine cutting out as you went round corners. It kept going back but was always returned with the same fault. It was also much more expensive on fuel than I thought it would be and absolutely drunk petrol (it had to have a new petrol engine for the conversion to work). There were times when it was nice to drive, but this stalling as you went round corners totally spoiled it. I spoke to other drivers who'd had the conversion at the time and they all had the same fault. I persevered until 2008 when I sold it for £500 – I was

amazed that I wasn't just charged for having it towed away!

I now drive a TX4 and would have considered a Vito if it didn't just look like a minicab. Perhaps I'm just old fashioned!

**Ata Kasap (A57)**

Thanks for the views Jim and Ata. Hopefully the conversion process has improved over the past ten years and I believe it is now done on your own diesel engine, which should save a huge amount. If there are any of the other 13 drivers who converted via Camden Council still out there, please let *Call Sign* know how your cab got on ...Ed

## And while we're on the subject...

Giving gas converted taxis an extra 5 years is certainly good and sensible news for those who have them. My old gas Metro is still around. I gave it to **Steve Sharpe (F34)** to use privately when I drive his cab to go to work. It is not licensed and unfortunately is already 18 years old. Steve just passed his 'S' reg two months ago and it still has 2 years left, but should anything expensive happen to Steve's cab (engine blows or a write off) we could now revert back to the gas cab for the remaining few years.

I am a bit reluctant to write on a subject that I now know very little about. I don't even know if or who is doing any gas conversions on taxis. I had my conversion done in 2000 and received a subsidy (although not through *Call Sign*) and it still cost me over £4500. That was without getting a spare wheel fitted onto the rear of the cab (an extra £500). Without any subsidy I believe that the cost would have been nearer £12,000 for the conversion and a new petrol engine and accessories. I understand that the diesel engine will now be converted to gas. This would be considerably cheaper but I haven't got the foggiest idea about cost so cannot comment regarding the economics of converting.

I was extremely pleased with my conversion for economy, response and quietness. On the negative side there was an inherent stalling problem, which was never addressed due to the poor design of the gas apparatus. To this day, the stalling still exists and the reliability is still in question – but probably nothing that spending another £700 wouldn't cure!

**Steve Shaller (F34J)**

*Call Sign* has sent an interviewer out to speak to DaC drivers whose cabs are approaching the 15-year mark to see whether a gas conversion in exchange for an extra 5 years is something that would interest them. The responses are in this issue. Meanwhile, anyone interested in a conversion should contact Stanley Roth (ex Y53) on [gastaxi@aol.com](mailto:gastaxi@aol.com) ...Ed

## Where are my Powerpills?

Dear Editor

Earlier this year I downloaded a fuel usage application for my smartphone and was horrified to discover my Metrocab 3 was averaging only 18MPG, so I set out to try and improve it by giving Powerpill a try. However, I had recycled my issue of *Call Sign* with their contact details, so I Googled them and found [powerpillonline.com](http://powerpillonline.com). Great! I set up an account with them on 1st August and ordered £16 worth of Powerpills. Once I entered the payment part of their site, I was transferred to *Paypal* to finalise payment, but all my details were way out of date and my card details needed updating before the purchase could be confirmed. This is where my woes begin, because I never got around to updating my cards until 9th August. Once completed, I clicked on the *Paypal* link to finish the purchase, which was successful. I was given a unique confirmation code, my credit card was duly charged and I then waited, but no Powerpills arrived. So I emailed Powerpill and was informed that the order had been cancelled. On close inspection of their terms and conditions, I read that orders automatically self-cancel if payment is not received within a short period. So again I emailed Powerpill informing them that payment was sent after this self-cancellation period and could they please either credit my account or send my original order. I waited and had no reply or action. Over the following weeks and months I tried twice more via email and lastly via Royal Mail, but again with no result. I can only conclude that at best, their customer service department is useless and at worst this site is run as a scam. Therefore I would urge our drivers to avoid this website.

Of course, if you are reading this article in *Call Sign*, then maybe [Powerpillonline.com](http://Powerpillonline.com) may also read it and sort out my order. If



# Mailshot

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there is a happy ending to this saga I will write further to keep readers updated.

**Michael Lewis (Y37)**

**Call Sign has dealt with Power Pill for several years and never had any problems until now. We tried phoning and received no response and as a result have removed their advert. My apologies to Michael ...Ed**

## Westfield Stratford

*Hi Al*

I love the mag! Is it possible that we could have a more detailed map on the new Westfield at Stratford? I understand there are three ins and outs, whereas the last map in the trade papers wasn't very clear. Any assistance would be appreciated...

**Steve Denison (W65)**

**Always happy to help, Steve. See Nash's Numbers ...Ed**

## Eurostar exit

*Dear Alan*

I see from the *November Call Sign* that Allan Evans is trying to sort out the problem of delays in opening the exit barrier at Eurostar. The major problem I have found is when the official at the entrance barrier has gone off duty at about 22.00 and I am locked in. I have found the solution is to phone the security office on 020 7843 7604 and very soon an obliging person comes along to release the exit gate.

**Laurence Kelvin (W88)**

**Thanks for the phone number Laurence, it could come in useful. Allan has been trying to sort the problem out but it has been far more difficult than anyone thought possible! After all, I would have assumed that a buzzer on the gate to a security guard with a remote control switch would not have been that difficult to undertake. But just getting hold of someone who knows the situation has been a nightmare ...Ed**

## Eurostar late night answer?

*Hi Alan*

The problem with our Eurostar waiting area is that usually when you get there, someone is in the entry box but by the time we get PoB - around 10-15 minutes later - that person has clocked off and left the waiting cabs

stuck inside the station. Eventually someone arrives to let cabs out, but the passengers are far from happy by then. I think that if we pulled up on the west side of Midland Road opposite the exit after 10.30 pm, our passengers could easily find us as we would be fully visible from bay 6. The west side of Midland Road at this point is currently marked out for loading, but I don't think anyone from Camden Council would object at that time of night - it's not as though we're talking about hundreds of cabs...

**Eddie Lambert (V37)**

**Problem is, Eddie, that it's taken so long to get passengers to learn where the Coach Park is - never mind moving it to the outside. As I write this, Allan Evans has told me that he has finally managed to contact the right person and an answer should appear in this issue or the next. In the meantime, see Allan's report in this issue for the latest update ...Ed**

## New terminals...

*Hi Alan*

I am very much looking forward to receiving the new computer terminal (*Reflections of the Chairman, November Call Sign*). I hope it will be a much easier installation with fewer wires and drilling. And when the sun is shining, I won't have to use a newspaper to make a shadow, which I've found to be much worse in the Vito, having to take care not to shred the wires when moving seat. Going by what I can do on my smartphone, it shouldn't need to be much bigger.

Speaking to drivers who have teenage children, the way they book a cab / taxi is always via their smartphone, so I think we must catch up with the latest ways cabs are now being booked.

A few years back, a friend who belonged to a taxi union lent me his membership card to get a 30% discount on my O2 tariff. It was all above board and he could share this discount with friends and family for up to six times. We all need a mobile phone and with 2000 of us, there could be some dealing to be done. I think it would be worth paying someone who is experienced at this sort of negotiating. The possibilities are endless.

**Steven Bryant (Y41)**

**No doubt you will let us know what you think when the new terminals are released Steven ...Ed**



## Green or yellow?

*Hi Alan*

Having read about the furore concerning the green and yellow stickers for all-London and suburban drivers in *Call Sign* and with Christmas approaching, I wonder if you could tell me when these stickers are planned to go on board? They would surely remove any temptation that suburban drivers may have to stray out of their area as there currently seem to be a larger than usual number of suspect taxis about...

**David Ballard (N28)**

**I still haven't heard and if it doesn't happen soon, then Christmas certainly won't see the stickers ...Ed**

## DaC, LTPH and apps

*Hi Alan*

I was wondering what LTPH would think about taxis displaying a radio circuit logo also having an app logo elsewhere on the cab? Would it not confuse passengers who saw a taxi with a logo that they hadn't phoned, because I have already seen a DaC cab with an app logo as well as the DaC one.

**Jon Robinson (E88)**

**I can't speak for LTPH, Jon, but while there is uncertainty about being on DaC and also having an app, there is absolutely no uncertainty in the fact that you cannot display another logo on a DaC cab ...Ed**

## Thanks Call Sign

*Hi Al*

Just a note to say cheers for the moral and monetary (£50) support *Call Sign* sponsored me for in competing my 1000 push-ups and sit-ups at the Grosvenor Gardens Shelter in aid of my friend and former Dial-a-Cab driver 'Yorkshire' Geoff Foster. Geoff has had a kidney removed in a cancer operation and I'm sure he will be very grateful to all those who donated.

**Jon Trevor (W94)**

**The story of Jon's monumental task is elsewhere inside this issue. Our best wished go our to Yorkshire Geoff ...Ed**

## Breakers?

*Hi Al*

In the *November Call Sign* article 'sitting comfortably then we'll begin', there was mention of taxi breakers in Forest Road,



# Mailshot

continued from page 34

Hainault. Do you have the actual address please?

**Gerry Dunn MBE (S84)**

**Yep! It's Elite Taxi Garage, Unit AX, 11/17 Fowler Road, Hainault Business Park, IG6 3UJ. Telephone 0208 498 1910 ...Ed**

## Remembering Maxine

*Dear Alan*

Thanks for including my letter (*Thank you for Maxine*) in the November *Call Sign* and thanks also for your kind words. I had quite forgotten that you and some others drivers had given so much of your time to St. Joseph's hospice. I can remember an article or two way back about those efforts. As for St. Joseph's staff being kind of founders of the MacMillan service, I was completely unaware of that.

I could now say that I will be ferrying people around local hospices myself, but that wouldn't be true, but people's small kindnesses and consideration towards my wife and I in recent months have made me more aware of people around me and I will in future take a bit more time and trouble over neighbours and friends. So thanks again for your kindness.

Incidentally, I think you are an excellent editor of the mag, fair-minded and sensible. Keep it up.

**George Carter (T22)**

**Thanks for the letter George. I hope you don't mind, but in remembering your daughter Maxine, I'd also like to take this opportunity to remember the other three DaC drivers who helped both Ken Freeborn and myself for those 6 years at St Joseph's hospice but who are sadly no longer with us. They were Ian Cameron, Tony Jack and John Cox ...Ed**

## Austin FX4 taximeter?

*Sir*

I am looking for an old taxi meter for my 1967 Austin FX4 here in Southern California. Any suggestions?

**Jack W. Carroll**

**Irvine, California**

**I passed Jack's request over to London Vintage Taxi Association Chairman Doug Cheshire and following a few quick emails, Jack joined the LVTA via Call Sign reader and LVTA US Secretary/Vice**

**Chairman John Freeston. Hopefully Jack will now find his meter ...Ed**

## DaC Credit Union

*Hi Alan*

Unfortunately my TX4 engine seized at 111,000 miles so I hope if through *Call Sign* you can please pass on my grateful thanks to everyone at the DaC Credit Union. Their boundless energy in assisting me turned my stress into calm. Anybody who is not a member should reconsider. On the other side, the total indifference shown by the LCDC was amazing. I am considering cancelling my membership. There are two types of people... those of action and those of the mouth. Our DaC Credit Union guys are of the action type.

**Stephen Field (F68)**

**Sorry to hear about the cab Stephen, but your views on our credit union are shared by many members. I too can't understand why every single DaC driver isn't in it. After all, even if you don't need a loan you have some useful savings for whenever you want them. As for the LCDC, I've just seen the Chairman's Report and I think they are too busy chasing him to worry about you! ...Ed**

## And there it was...gone!

*Sir*

Was it ever thus that we all make mistakes. The London Taxi Company (M&O) took a brand new TX4 for plating to SGS in Tottenham and as per procedure left the vehicle parked on the forecourt with the keys in the ignition for the examiner.

A hoodie strode in and drove off with the cab! The insurance company have absolved themselves of liability and the unfortunate M&O driver has been relieved of his position.

So if you see an unplated TX4 going cheap, think twice because it may be an Arthur Daley special!

**Joseph Batty (W90)**

**Whoops! Well it had 7 miles on the clock, so at least it wasn't new! ...Ed**

## Advertising on the roof?

*Hi Al*

I recently noticed that Climate Cars have advertising on their doors, which I thought

wasn't allowed, while Addison Lee seems to now be advertising on the car roof while also increasing their logo size on the back windows. Is it now just a free-for-all?

**Colin Jenkins (Y22)**

**LTPH told me that they have no restrictions on taxi or PH font sizes on rear windows, it's about the material used and it must be translucent etc. As for roof ads, there is no policy on that and as such, no restrictions. If DaC wanted to advertise on the taxi roof, then they could. However, as just a handful of drivers volunteered to fit the cash phone number onto their door, I assume there would be little interest.**

**Lastly, door ads on Climate Cars (and Green Tomato). LTPH say they allow low emission PH vehicles to have such signage if they deem it appropriate. So when car companies like the above two use vehicles that are said to reduce the impact on the environment, limited company specific branding is allowed. LTPH do not call that advertising and they say that each request is judged on its own merits. And Colin, don't forget that I'm just the messenger! ...Ed**

*Hi Alan*

I totally disagree with higher fares during the games. However, a fairer incentive would be a £5 surcharge to pick up from official Olympic Venue ranks. This would give the Marshals a steady supply of cabs without them being hailed on nearby streets and our regular customers would not be ripped off.

**Dave Ballard N28)**

**Anyone else have any suggestions? Call Sign is your mag ...Ed**

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